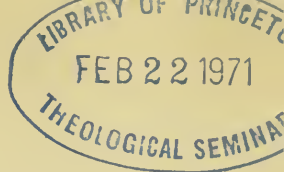




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Church and state in Scotland



CHURCH AND STATE IN SCOTLAND

A NARRATIVE OF

THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

FROM 1560 TO 1843

The Third Series of Chalmers Lectures

BY
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EXTRACT FROM THE DEED INSTITUTING THE
CHALMERS LECTURESHIP. (The Deed being dated
26th May 1880.)

"I, ROBERT MACFIE, Esq. of Airds and Oban, considering that I feel deeply interested in the maintenance of the principles of the Free Church of Scotland, have transferred . . . the sum of £5000 sterling for the purpose of founding a Lectureship in memory of the late THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D., LL.D., under the following conditions : namely—1. The Lectureship shall . . . be called *The Chalmers Lectureship* ; 2. The Lecturer shall hold the appointment for four years, and shall be entitled . . . to one-half of the income. . . . 3. The subject shall be 'Headship of Christ over His Church, and its independent Spiritual Jurisdiction ;' 4. The Lecturer shall be bound to deliver publicly a Course of not fewer than six Lectures . . . in Edinburgh, in Glasgow, and in Aberdeen ; 5. The Lecturer shall be bound, within a year to print and publish at his own risk not fewer than 1500 copies . . . and deposit three copies in the libraries of the Free Church Colleges ; 6. One-half of the balance of the income . . . shall be laid out in furnishing with a copy all the Ministers and Missionaries of the Free Church"

P R E F A C E.

IN the following Lectures two objects have been kept in view, namely :—

First, to show that the conflict which ended in the Disruption had really been going on more or less prominently since the time of the Reformation.

Secondly, to indicate (Lecture VI.) the importance of the Voluntary Controversy in preparing for the events of 1843. This part of the subject has hitherto received less attention than it deserves.

All through the History it will be seen how closely the principle of Spiritual Independence is connected with the cause of Civil Liberty, and still more with the interests of vital religion in the Church and in the country.

EDINBURGH, *December* 1891.

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LECTURE I.

1560-1567.

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1560-1567.

WHEN I was asked to deliver this course of Lectures, I presume it was expected that the subject would be treated somewhat in the same way as in the *Annals of the Disruption*. I certainly have no intention of again going over the ground so ably occupied by Sir Henry Moncrieff and Dr Wilson. In their hands the legal and Scriptural arguments for Spiritual Independence have been so fully stated as really not to admit of further discussion. But on the historical side it seems to me something remains to be said. Already during the 'Ten Years' Conflict the fact was amply proved that our Church had not only claimed all along to be spiritually independent, but from time to time had made good her claim. The question, however, remained, What had been the practical value of this independence? What power had it for

good? We know how tenaciously our fathers held it and fought for it, and what a noble history in that respect it has. But our aim in these Lectures will be to show that all along spiritual independence has proved itself a power in the land, influencing and moulding the course of events. Only a rapid summary can here be attempted, but it may be enough to prove that this is no mere abstract theory. It is a living force, which has done much important work in the past, and which may yet have serious work to do in the future.

It may be well at the outset to define what is meant by spiritual independence, a term which will often meet us in the course of these Lectures.

When we speak, then, of the Church as spiritually independent, we mean that Christ as her Divine Head has given her authority to regulate her own spiritual affairs in obedience to His revealed will. In doing this, she must be free from State—or any other—control; Christ is her only King and Head; His will she must obey, and His crown rights she is bound to maintain.

Now, in our Scottish Church History there are six well-marked periods, in each of which

there is for this principle a time of struggle, followed by a time of success.

1. The earliest of these is the period of seven years under Queen Mary from 1560 to 1567, ending under the regency of the Earl of Murray.
2. There is the conflict with Regent Morton and King James, ending in the great Act of 1592, the charter of the Church.
3. There are the forty-six years of worse conflict, from 1592 to 1638, ending in the second Reformation.
4. There are the twenty-eight years of persecution, from 1660 to 1688, ending in the Revolution settlement.
5. There is the long reign of Moderatism, ending in 1834, when the Evangelical party in the Church rose into the ascendant.
6. There is the Ten Years' Conflict, ending in 1843.

In each of these the principle of the Free Church may be studied, first in conflict, and then in victory. Even the Ten Years' Conflict had

in one sense its success, destined in its ultimate results, I believe, to be the greatest of all.

We begin with the Reformation period in the days of Queen Mary and John Knox. The romantic and tragic events of that time in Scotland have an undying interest for the whole civilised world. With the lapse of years, indeed, the story of Queen Mary's life seems more than ever to fascinate the minds of men. The exciting incidents of her history, however, we must leave almost wholly out of view, our object being simply to show the relation in which the Church and the civil powers then stood to each other.

There are two important documents which meet us at the outset—the first Confession of Faith, and the first Book of Discipline; but before looking at these, we may note how they came to be prepared and adopted.

In 1560, when the Lords of the Congregation had succeeded, and the way was cleared by the withdrawal of the French troops, the Scottish Parliament met at Edinburgh (1st August), and almost by instinct the statesmen and the churchmen at once fell into the right position towards each other. A petition signed by all ranks of

the Scottish people had been presented, asking the abolition of Popery, but Parliament wanted to know what they were to put in the place of Romish error. It was not their part to formulate a Confession of Faith. Knox and four of his friends were called on. "The work was gladly undertaken," Calderwood says,¹ and certainly they did not keep Parliament waiting. In four days the Confession was ready, a strong, straightforward statement of Bible truth, in harmony with the Standards of the other Reformed Churches, and much less complex than the Westminster Confession of later date.²

But though Parliament would not undertake to draw up the Confession, they felt that in this matter they too had a responsibility of their own. They must consider it, and make up their minds as to whether it was to be recognised as the national Confession of Scotland. The scene in which this was done is described by Knox.

"Our Confession," he says, "was publicly read, first in the audience of the Lords of the Articles, and afterwards in the audience of the

¹ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 15.

² Knox's Hist. ii. 95-120.

haill Parliament, where were present not only such as professed Christ Jesus, but also a great number of adversaries of our religion, such as the before-named bishops . . . who were commanded in God's name to object if they could. Some of our ministers were present, standing on their feet ready to have answered." A day was appointed, 17th July 1560, for voting; "our Confession was read every article by itself over again . . . and the votes of every man were required. The only adverse votes came from three of the noblemen;¹ and yet," Knox goes on, "for their dis-assenting they produced no better reason but, 'We will believe as our fathers believed.' The bishops (Papistical we mean) spak nothing." These bishops, we should remember, had before their eyes the spectacle of Knox standing on his feet with his friends behind him ready to answer. The sight may have been enough. They thought it their wisest course to keep quiet, and they "spak nothing." "The rest of the haill three

¹ Knox's Hist. ii. 121, 122. Randolph the English ambassador mentions two dissentients in addition to those given by Knox (Cunningham's Hist. i. 348).

estates by their public votes affirmed the doctrine."

Thus the Church produces her Confession, Parliament carefully considers it, and gives it such sanction as seems competent for them. On the very threshold of our Reformation history the Church on the one hand, and the State on the other, each take their own part in helping on the cause of true religion in the land.

There was, however, another thing to be done. The Popish Jurisdiction which had weighed so heavily on Scotland was abolished, but the Privy Council wanted to know what form of Church Government must be put in its place. Parliament had been dissolved.¹ Knox and five of his friends had "receaved a charge" "requiring and commanding" them to prepare a plan showing

¹ There is some difficulty as to the dates. The Book of Discipline itself intimates that the Privy Council called for its preparation on 29th April 1560, and that it was given in on the 20th of May. Principal J. Cunningham seems to be doubtful as to this statement. "The early date of April 1560 is surprising" (Church Hist. of Scotland, i. 356). Dr M'Crie had already declined to accept it (Life of Knox, ii. 5). At these dates, April and May 1560, Scotland was still in the turmoil of civil war, the Lords of the Congregation with English help fighting the Queen Regent and her French troops. Knox himself (Hist. ii. 128) and Calder-

“how the Kirk mycht be establissed in a good and godlie policy.” Meantime the first meeting of the General Assembly was held at Edinburgh in the Magdalen Chapel—the old grey tower of which may still be seen where it stands at the head of the Cowgate, and marks the locality of that great historical event when in December 1560 the brave band of six ministers and thirty-four elders came together and constituted themselves the Supreme Court of the Reformed Church of Scotland. It was the first meeting of that Assembly which has done so much to make Scotland what it is. Knox and his friends prepared the Book of Discipline, setting forth the Presbyterian form of Church Government in its leading features. It was derived, as they are careful to state, not from Geneva or France, but directly from the New Testament. In January 1561 it was laid before a meeting which Spottiswood and Knox call a “Convention,” but which may be held as being

wood (Hist. ii. 41) are more to be relied on as to the course of events. They both state that the preparation of the Book of Discipline was not entered on till after the Confession of Faith had been adopted and Parliament dissolved in the end of the following month of August.

what Row calls it, a meeting of the Assembly. There he states the Book received "the allowance and approbation of the whole General Assembly after that some articles which were thought too long were abridged."¹ In the meantime it had been submitted to the Privy Council. A meeting was held, it was carefully read over, and a majority, including the most influential members, approved of it and signed it.² A minority, however, raised opposition, and so far prevailed that it never received the formal sanction either of the Privy Council or of Parliament.³ All the same, the Church upheld it in her ecclesiastical procedure. She claimed the right to settle her own constitution in her own way, and went on to act under it whether it had or had not the sanction of the State.⁴

¹ Row's Hist. of the Kirk, etc., p. 16. The first Assembly had *adjourned to meet at that date* (Book of Univ. Kirk, p. 5).

² Knox's Hist. ii. 257, 258.

³ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 42, 160.

⁴ Thus she enforced the subscription of it on the Superintendent of Galloway in 1562 (Calderwood's Hist. ii. 185). She also ordained according to the fourth head of the Booke that "all persons serving in the ministry who had not entered into their charges according to the order appointed in the said Booke be inhibited" (*Ibid.* p. 206).

Here, then, we stand at the opening of the Church's history, and in these two documents—the first Confession of Faith and the first Book of Discipline—we have the earliest authorities in regard to her constitution.

Looking into the Confession, there are three statements to be noted. The first in section 16 simply affirms that Christ is “the only Head” of the Church—the *only* Head—expressly excluding all others.¹ This applies to the Church invisible—Christ's spiritual body. But section 18 speaks of the visible Church and gives three marks by which it is distinguished—the faithful preaching of the Word, the faithful administration of the sacraments, and godly discipline. In section 11, which treats of Christ's Ascension, He is said to be the “only HEAD of His Kirk, our just Lawgiver, and our only High Priest,” “in which honours, or offices, if man or angel presume to intrude themselves, we utterly detest and abhor them as blasphemous to our Sovereign and supreme Governor, Christ Jesus.”² England, we must remember, had set up the King as Head of

¹ Knox's Hist. ii. 108.

² *Ibid.* ii. 103.

the Church, but here the Protestant Church of Scotland in the very act of struggling into existence proclaims to all the world that Christ is her only Head. She will have no Pope, no King with his royal supremacy—her only King is Christ. It is her first bold word fearlessly spoken in the hearing of Christendom—We know no Head but Christ.

The Confession, indeed, does by no means exclude kings and magistrates from the sphere of religion. The 24th section goes so far as to say that to them “maist principally” belongs “the reformation and purgation of religion.” It was a sacred principle with our Reformers that kings and magistrates were appointed not only for civil policy, but for the maintenance and advancement of religion; and if in this respect they seemed to ascribe too much to the civil power, the reasons are not difficult to find. It never occurred to them that Church and State would be at variance. They knew that the secular arm was needed to disentangle Scottish society from Popery and its canon law, which controlled all things civil and sacred, coiling itself round the life of the nation. It was the civil power which must rid the country of this incubus. At

the same time, it must be confessed there was an error into which our forefathers fell in holding the Old Testament rules and examples as binding to a degree not warranted. It was this made them hold idolatry to be punishable by death, and hence the observance of the mass was in certain extreme cases made a capital crime. There is, however, no instance of this punishment ever having been inflicted in the days of Knox.¹

After all, however, there were limits within which the civil power must confine itself. The moment we turn to the first Book of Discipline we find the Church claiming exclusively the right of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which they say "stands in reforming and correcting the evils which the civil sword doth either neglect or may not punish."²

There is even an attempt made to mark off the limits of the two jurisdictions. It is not

¹ Indeed, it seems as if the intention of the law had been to prevent the necessity of ever having to inflict the death penalty. For the first offence there was to be confiscation of goods, etc. ; for the second, banishment ; only in the case of a return from banishment and defiance of the law was there to be "justifieing to the dead" (Knox's Hist. ii. 124).

² Knox's Hist. ii. 227. M'Crie, Knox, ii. 129, note.

very successful, however, as first attempts seldom are,¹ but this much at least is made plain—according to the Book of Discipline there is not only the civil power in the country regulating the temporal interests of the nation, but there is the Church holding her own authority and doing her work in the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline.

These principles, then, having been thus embodied in our Church's Constitution, it was desirable to obtain for them the sanction of the Crown. When Parliament (17th July 1560) adopted the Confession of Faith, and abolished the Papal Jurisdiction (24th August 1560), Sir James Sandilands was sent to France to lay the Acts before Francis and Mary and obtain the royal assent needful to give them the force of statute law. "This was done," Knox says, "rather to show our dutiful obedience than to beg of them any strength to our religion which from God hath full power and needeth not the suffrage of men."

¹ The sin of adultery, for example, is to be dealt with by the civil magistrate and not by the Church; the "oppression of the poor by deceiving of them" in buying or selling by "wring mete or measure" is to be dealt with, not by the civil magistrate, but by the Church (Knox's Hist. ii. 227).

Mary was Queen of France, reigning, as her portraits still show her, in all the splendour of youth and beauty in that brilliant Court. The request of the Scottish Parliament was met with a curt refusal, and Sir James Sandilands came back to tell of the coldness with which he had been received. But the statesmen and Reformers of Scotland did not greatly care. The royal assent would have been a good thing, but they can do without it. Never for a moment do they admit a doubt that the Acts which overthrew Popery and ratified the Confession were valid. Let King or Queen say or refuse to say what they please, the Protestant Church with her Confession of Faith is the Church of Scotland.¹

The same thing took place when the Privy Council refused to sanction the first Book of

¹ "How the said Lord of Sanct Johne [Sir J. Sandilands] was entreated we list not rehearse, but always no ratification brought he to us. But that we little regarded or yet do regard" (Knox's Hist. ii. 126). "The Guisians rebuked him sharply" (Calderwood's Hist. ii. 40). In the end it was thought best to dismiss him courteously, and try to gain his personal influence in favour of the Court. He brought a letter from Francis and Mary to the Scottish Estates (Tytler, vi. 229 note), the contents of which Knox must have known.

Discipline. Some of the nobles felt its rules would ill agree with the kind of life they were leading. A still more fatal objection was the demand for funds which it made on behalf of the poor, of national education and the support of the ministry.¹ Accordingly, it was never formally ratified; but all the same, it was by these rules in their leading features that the Church carried on her government. Parliament knows this, the Privy Council know it, they never interfere, and the important thing is that the nation supported the Church in what she was doing.² She asked no man's leave. She acted on the spiritual authority which she held from Christ.

Thus far all was clear, but dangerous times were close at hand. That same month of December 1560 in which the first General Assembly met saw the death of the French King. Mary the young Queen was a widow, and a new scene was opening for her and for Scotland. Her half-brother Lord James Stewart was sent by the Scottish Estates to invite her over. It

¹ Knox's Hist. ii. 128, 129, 222. See also p. 297.

² M'Crie, Life of Knox, ii. 5.

was Knox's wish to make it a condition that she should conform to the religion of her subjects. He took the ground which the British Constitution does to-day, that the sovereign of a Protestant nation should be a Protestant. Her brother Lord James and the other statesmen, however, felt that she must be allowed to have mass celebrated for herself and her attendants, provided it was done in private.¹

All the world knows the parting scene when Mary bade farewell to France. Escaping the English cruisers who were lying on the watch,² she landed at Leith in August 1561, just a year after the Reformation had been established. There was extraordinary joy all over the land at her coming. Scotland was once more a nation, not a mere appanage of France,³ a risk which had been narrowly escaped. Mary was the representative of the long line of their ancient Scottish kings, and the enthusiastic

¹ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 48.

² Tytler, vi. 269.

³ There is little doubt that before her marriage to the King of France Mary signed papers "the object and intent of which was to convey her kingdom as if it were her private property to the house of Valois" (Hill Burton, iv. 7, 9).

loyalty inherent in the Scottish character rose to welcome her. Her youth, her beauty, the charm of her fascinating manners, made her almost irresistible. But under that soft exterior there lay great strength of purpose and what Knox calls "a crafty wit," a keen intellect of no common power.¹ Reared as a zealous Roman Catholic, in the bad atmosphere of the French Court, she had been trained in all the arts and stratagems of State policy by her uncles the Guises, the craftiest politicians among the statesmen of France;² and she came to Scotland with certain fixed ideas, one of which was that it would be the glory of her reign if she could restore the country to the Roman See.

After entering on her kingdom, her first step showed the effect of her training. The counsellors whom she called to her side were the leading Protestants, notably Maitland of Lethington and her half-brother Lord James Stewart, the one the ablest, and the other the best of Scottish states-

¹ "Great genius and sagacity" (Hill Burton, iv. 296).

² She had learned also "the profound dissimulation of that political school of which Catherine of Medici was the chief instructor and her daughter-in-law [Mary] an apt scholar" (*Ibid.* iv. 205, 206).

men.¹ The Roman Catholics were markedly ignored²—it was skilfully done.

Another step was at least a bold one. She had mass at once celebrated in the Chapel at Holyrood. It was a defiance both of the law and of the public opinion of Scotland, and caused some disturbance. But the people were in a tumult of loyalty. She was floating on the crest of the wave. If she was ever to win Scotland to Popery, a beginning must be made, and now was the time. She took the step, and again it seemed skilfully done. The reply, however, was not long in coming. Next Sabbath Knox was in his place in St Giles', and the trumpet gave no uncertain sound. Denouncing what had been done as idolatrous, he uttered the well-known words, "One mass was more fearful to him than gif ten thousand armed enemies were landed in any part of the realm."³ If it be asked, Why was the mass so terrible and these denunciations so extreme? it is enough to say that the mass was the symbol of Popery, and Popery at that time was bloodthirsty. Knox

¹ This policy had been arranged before she left France (Sir J. Melville's *Memoirs*, p. 61).

² Tytler, vi. 287.

³ Knox's *Hist.* ii. 276.

had private intelligence both with the Church and with some at the Court of France. He knew how the flames of persecution were blazing in Spain and Italy, and what barbarities had been inflicted by Alva in the Netherlands (M'Crie, Knox, ii. 27). He knew indeed that the Continent was already fermenting with that fierce hatred which culminated in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew, and that Mary's uncles the Guises were at the head of the movement. In Scotland Popery had many adherents; the fires were hardly cold in which Wishart and Milne and other martyrs had perished. It was no wonder that Knox felt keenly, and expressed himself strongly.

After this sermon he had his first memorable interview with the Queen, in which were given the earliest indications of the coming conflict. In that conference the claims of Popery, of royal supremacy, and arbitrary power were all dwelt on. It is one of the most picturesque scenes in Scottish history.¹ Mary was there in all her attractiveness, Knox in his fearless honesty. They stand face to face, and from that moment the Queen on the one hand, and the

¹ Knox's Hist. ii. 277.

Reformer on the other, both knew well who was the adversary whom each had most to dread.

Among the topics which they discussed, Mary seems to approach the subject of these Lectures, and makes very short work indeed of the principle of spiritual independence. "Ye have taught the people," she says, "to receive another religion than their princes can allow, and how can that doctrine be of God, seeing that God commands the people to obey their princes." Here is royal supremacy going so far as to claim control not only over the Church, but over the religious beliefs of her subjects. Knox's reply is plain and direct. "Religion," he says, "comes not from princes, but from the Eternal God alone;" and then he adds a remark which none of her courtiers would have made, "It has often happened, madam, that princes are the most ignorant of all others in God's true religion."

After debating the question of the arbitrary power of the Sovereign and the right of the people to resist, they pass on to speak of Popery, and especially of the mass, on which Knox states and supports his views with characteristic and somewhat rugged energy, till the poor Queen cries out, "Ye are ower sair for me," but she

knows some who could answer him. "Madam," he said, "would to God the learnedest Papist in Europe were here." "Weel," she replied, "ye may perhaps get that sooner than ye believe." "Assuredly," he answered, "if ever I get that in my life, I get it sooner than I believe." And so the meeting ended, for the Queen was called away to dinner. As she left him, however, Knox added some parting words in which the true nature of the man comes out, "I pray God, madam, that you may be as blessed within the commonwealth of Scotland as ever Deborah was in Israel."¹

But if Knox was not to be shaken, there were others among the statesmen whose Protestant zeal gave way under the spell of Mary's influence. It stirred the spirit of Campbell of Kinzean-cleuch when he saw what was going on. Meeting Lord Ochiltree on his way to Holyrood, he said, "I perceive that the fire-edge is not off ye yet, but I fear ye shall become as calm as the rest when the holy water of the Court is sprinkled on ye. I think there is some enchantment in the Court whereby men are bewitched." Mary's fascination was no doubt great, but what prevailed with

¹ Knox's Hist. ii. 286.

many was the trust which she seemed to repose in the Protestant statesmen,¹ and the craft with which from time to time she held out hopes of being won over to attend the preaching of the Protestant ministers. There is something pathetic in the way in which they cling to the hope of her becoming a Protestant.² They little knew her secret feelings as we know them now.³

We come now to the time when the first direct assault was made on the Church's spiritual independence. Four months after Mary landed the General Assembly again met in December 1561, and already it was found that a Court party had been formed among the laymen,⁴ and they stood aloof, declining to take their seats as members of Assembly. Knox and his friends sent to demand their attendance, and when the two parties met the reason came out. Maitland

¹ Who guides the Queen and Court, who but the Protestants (Knox's Hist. ii. 363).

² Calderwood's Hist. ii. 147. At a later period she dangled before their view a similar prospect (M'Crie's Knox, ii. 133).

³ All the time Mary's secret correspondence shows how determined she was to restore Popery, mourning over "the damnable errors" of her Protestant subjects (Hill Burton, iv. 218). She did not deceive Knox.

⁴ Tytler, Hist. vi. 291.

of Lethington took a formal objection that the Assembly could not be held, as the Queen had not given her consent to its meeting. Maitland was a statesman of great ability, but of little religion. The previous year when Knox preached at the opening of Parliament and appealed for aid in behalf of the Church, Maitland mockingly remarked, "So, then, we must all now forget ourselves and bear the barrow for building the Kirk."¹ Since then he had been promoted to be Secretary of State, and had fallen, one of the first, under Mary's influence. When he protested, therefore, that the General Assembly could not meet without the Queen's express permission, he, as Secretary of State, spoke with the highest authority in the kingdom.

Knox saw that they had come to a crisis. At once and in the most decisive terms he protested that if the liberty of the Kirk depended on the Queen's allowance, we should lack not only Assemblies, but the public preaching of the Gospel. This Maitland objected to. Knox rejoined with increasing vehemence, "Take from

¹ Knox in his History adds, "God be merciful to the Speaker, for we fear that . . . the building of his awin house . . . shall not be so prosperous as we desire it were" (Hist. ii. 89).

us the freedom of Assemblies, and take from us the evangel, for without Assemblies how shall good order and unity in doctrine be kept.”¹

It is obvious that the question here was vital. The very life of the Presbyterian Church, especially at that time, had its centre in the Assembly. If the Queen by simply refusing her sanction could suppress the Assembly, she could lay an arrest on the whole work of the Church. The two principles of Erastianism and Spiritual Independence are face to face on a most vital point, and it is important to note how the matter settles itself. Maitland has spoken out boldly for the Queen and her Erastian ascendancy, Knox has replied as boldly for the Church. But, after all, who cares for what Maitland says, or what the Queen was driving at? The Assembly acts. They decide the question by simply going on with their business. *Solvitur ambulando*. It was a way the Church had under Knox’s guidance. They let the whole world see whether they were independent or not—they acted.²

¹ Knox’s Hist. ii. 296.

² At the same time, there was not the slightest desire to conceal from the Queen and her Court what was done in the Assembly. Maitland and his friends were expressly urged “to counsel her

We can well understand why Mary wished to have the power of suppressing the Assembly.¹ Her two objects were to establish the arbitrary authority of the Crown and to restore Popery. Against both these designs the Assembly was the great obstacle.

It stood up for the civil liberties of the country. Far more than Parliament the Assembly represented the mind of the nation. The Scottish Parliaments had become utterly subservient;² and the General Assembly with its lay representatives from among the eldership had become the great organ through which public opinion was beginning to express itself. No other body in the country could so effectually rally to its side the support of the people. It would have suited Mary's purpose well if she could have got into her hands the power of

Grace if she were jealous of anything to be treated of, to send such as she would appoint to hear." It would seem that the first hint as to the sending of a Royal Commissioner came from the side of the Church (Calderwood's Hist. ii. 160; Petrie's Hist. part iii. p. 231).

¹ "Gladly would the Queen and her secret Council have had all the Assemblies of the godly discharged" (Knox's Hist. ii. 296).

² Skelton, Maitland of Lethington, etc., i. 153.

shutting up the Assembly as often and as long as she pleased.¹

We can understand also why the party of rapacious nobles who were grasping at the patrimony of the Church would support the Queen in getting the Assembly silenced. That Court was for ever asking unpleasant questions and making troublesome appeals. They wanted part of the Church's money for the support of the poor for the education of the country, and a decent maintenance for the ministers whose incomes were scandalously low. The nobles thought it intolerable to have them thus talking of the public good and raising obstacles between them and the plunder on which they wished to lay their hands. It would have pleased them well if Maitland and the Queen could have got a stop put to all this by closing the Assembly.

Thus it appears that there were great national and political interests to be served by insisting

¹ There was need to stand up for the liberties of the country. The Provost and Bailies of Edinburgh had displeased the Queen by a proclamation which they issued. "*Without cognition of the cause* the Queen caused the Provost and Bailies to be charged to waird in the Castle," and ordered the town to make a new election (Calderwood's Hist. ii. 155).

on the right of meeting. But there was one object which in Knox's view overshadowed all the rest—the preaching of the Gospel to his countrymen. When the passionate words broke from his lips, “Take from us the freedom of Assemblies, and take from us the evangel,” it was this roused him to contend for the inherent right of the Assembly as for a matter of life or death. Never was there a country more in need of the Gospel than Scotland at that time. Over wide districts the nobles had been ruling like little kings, often in defiance of all the laws, and the people were sunk in rudeness and ignorance. Popery had left a sad legacy of gross immorality and superstition, into the unsavoury details of which we need not enter. It was Knox's passionate desire to pervade the whole land with the light of Gospel truth. But the work was difficult, and the means were small. There were twelve Protestant ministers, all told, in 1560, and the question was where to find readers, exhorters, and preachers in anything like adequate numbers.

In these circumstances, and beset with such difficulties, Knox was appalled at the prospect of the Church having her hands tied by the meet-

ings of the Assembly being suppressed. That Assembly wielded the whole energies of those who were engaged in evangelising the country. It was at the Assembly, as the centre of religious influence, that the different agencies met. Assuredly the question of the Church's independence in that crisis was no mere speculative theory; it lay at the very heart of her work. No alien influence must have a right to hamper her. If the land is to be evangelised, the readers, the preachers, the pastors, and the superintendents too must be kept up to their work. All the impulse which the Assembly could give was needed, no royal hand must interpose. Hence the determined stand with which Knox confronted Maitland; the whole of his life work was at stake. It involved not only the spiritual independence of the Church and the freedom of the Assembly, but the very cause of Christ itself in Scotland. And so the Assembly is not to be held back. Maitland and his protest are brushed aside, and the Church goes on with her work.

In 1563, however, events occurred which made Knox feel what a formidable opponent Mary was. Ever since 1560 the Acts of Parliament establishing the Reformed religion had been

hanging in suspense. We saw how Francis and Mary had refused the royal assent necessary to give them legal force. When Mary came to Scotland the Reformers hoped to get her to agree, but she skilfully evaded their request ; and the result was that at any moment, if she saw a fitting opportunity, she could overturn Protestantism and restore Popery. So far as the law was concerned, the whole question of Reformation or no Reformation was hanging in suspense ; Mary held it in her hand.¹

At last, after two years, Parliament had to meet in 1563, and now the time had come when the Acts in favour of the Reformation ought to have been ratified. Besides, there was a good deal of irritation getting up in the country owing to the open celebration of the mass during Easter. The Gentlemen of the West were

¹ Since 1560 the Protestant Church was upheld "not so much by the legitimate position of an established national institution as by the strength of its supporters. Care was taken to leave it so unprotected by the head of the State that any day . . . the Reformation might have been abjured. . . . It scarcely needed an Act of the Estates to accomplish this. If the Romish party had been powerful enough, they and the Queen would probably not have paid so much respect to these Acts which had never obtained the royal assent as to repeal them by a counter Act of the Estates" (Hill Burton, v. 49, 50).

threatening to rise and take the law into their own hands. Mary sent for Knox, and had a long interview with him, spoke confidentially, and used all her arts to win him over. For once she so far succeeded. She got him to interfere and keep the Western Gentlemen quiet. She promised to have some priests punished for celebrating the mass, and just before Parliament met she threw them into prison. The effect of all this was seen. The statesmen, when Parliament met, refused to insist on Mary's signature to the Reformation Acts.¹ In vain Knox warned them that they were losing their only chance. Members of Parliament had their private ends to serve. The meeting was allowed to pass. Mary had gained her object. After a sham imprisonment the Popish ecclesiastics were set free. It mortified Knox to the uttermost to find not only that he had been outwitted, but that his most reliable supporters had failed him; and most of all, that Lord James Stewart, now Earl of Murray, had yielded to his sister's influence. It led to a personal disagreement. For nearly two years these friends were estranged. Knox,

¹ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 216, 217.

the champion of the Reformation, and Murray, the true-hearted statesman, were not on speaking terms.¹ The Queen had not only divided them, but had kept the Reformation Acts still in suspense, so that any day if she saw the way open she could restore Popery. It was skilfully done, and Knox felt how difficult it was to deal with such an adversary.²

In the meantime, the Church had been conducting her affairs in complete independence of the State. The Assembly met in June 1562, neither asking nor caring whether they had the Queen's sanction. They did their work, arranging, among other things, for the trial of the superintendents, who were to be called regularly to account by an Assembly consisting to a large extent of laymen. The following December they went on with their ecclesiastical arrangements, among other things setting up synods. Next June they passed an important Act, giving power of appeal from the Kirk-Session to the Synod,

¹ "The Earl of Murray was so frem to Mr Knox that nather by word nor by writt was there any communication betwixt them" (Calderwood's Hist. ii. 280).

² "All this was done of a most deape craft" (Knox's Hist. ii. 380).

and again from the Synod to the General Assembly, from which the Act says, "It shall not be free to the party to appeal."¹ Thus the Church passes enactments regulating her ecclesiastical affairs, and she does this in the exercise of her own inherent jurisdiction, which she holds from Christ. So it goes on from Assembly to Assembly. In 1564 one of the ministers is deposed, one is restored, one ordered not to leave his congregation. There is no State recognition, but the want of it is of no consequence. Thanks to the opposition of the Privy Council and the refusal of Mary to recognise the Reformation laws, the Church learned thus early what it was to be a Free Church spiritually independent. The lesson has never since been forgotten. She was compelled to take her own way in the exercise of her spiritual jurisdiction derived from Christ alone.

But while compelled thus to be independent, our fathers were as far as possible from being antagonistic. Church and State, they held, should be fellow-workers acting harmoniously for the good of the country. All along, the

¹ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 225.

Assembly wanted to have the boundaries of the two jurisdictions defined. In 1562, and again in 1564, conferences with this view were appointed to be held with the Privy Council in order that there might be no encroachment on either side. The Church was in earnest, but the Council of State were not, and the plan came to nothing. The idea seems to have been to have had an enumeration of particulars to be assigned separately to each of the jurisdictions. This would have failed. The only solution possible is to leave each a free hand, and make the decision of the civil authorities valid only to civil effects, and the decision of the Church valid only to spiritual effects. Indeed, as early as 1565 there are indications that the Church was finding her way to this conclusion. The question came before the Assembly as to certain offenders who had been cruel to children. Their punishment, the Assembly decides, must lie with the civil magistrate; but the scandal, the moral offence, must be dealt with by the Church, and they are to be excluded from religious privileges till they have satisfied the Kirk.¹ Here is the true

¹ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 303.

solution. The Law Courts are to handle the matter and decide it under its civil or criminal aspect, and the Church is equally free to handle it and decide it under its spiritual aspect and to spiritual effects.

One question now arose which touched the Church's Spiritual Independence, namely, the freedom of the pulpit. In 1563 Knox had given great offence by publicly urging the nobles to prevent Mary from marrying a Roman Catholic. She was courted by several continental princes, notably by the Prince Royal of Spain, a proposal which at one time seemed likely to be successful. Mary, after having worn the crown of France, was dazzled with the prospect of wearing the crown of Spain, in addition to that of Scotland, which she then wore, and of England, which she claimed and hoped yet to wear. It roused her anger when the voice of Knox broke in on those day dreams. At a passionate interview to which he was afterwards summoned, she exclaimed, "What have you to do with my marriage, and what are you in this Commonwealth?" "A subject born within the same, madam," he replied, "and God hath made me, however abject I seem in

your eyes, a profitable member within the same. Nay, madam, it pertaineth to me to forewarn such things as may harm it.”¹ She applied to the Lords of the Articles to have Knox prosecuted, but they thought it was better not to make the attempt.

Next year the subject was taken up in another way. A memorable conference was held between the leading men in Church and State, really between Knox and Maitland of Lethington.² Among other things, the freedom of the pulpit was discussed in connection with prayer for the Queen. The debate has been admired as a specimen of intellectual gladiatorship. Maitland, however, admitted, or rather held along with Knox, that Old Testament precedents are binding, and modern preachers are to do as the old Jewish prophets did. On that ground he had no case. Knox had the whole of the Old Testament at command. Maitland showed no small dialectic power and skill of fence; but from point to point Knox forces him to give ground till he suddenly

¹ In the pulpit he added, “I am not master of myself. I must obey Him who commandeth me to speak plainly” (Calderwood’s Hist. ii. 220).

² Knox’s Hist. 425-460.

changes from one topic to another, and in the end they leave the subject very much where they found it.

The pulpit, it should be remembered, was at that time the chief, almost the only, organ of public opinion. As yet the press was not. The ministers and elders were of the people and among the people. They knew what men were thinking and saying, and often it was only through the pulpit that the national sentiment could find expression.

The marriage of Mary with Darnley took place in the summer of 1565, and led to a whole course of events full of tragic interest. Her brother the Earl of Murray had acted a brother's part in doing what he could to prevent the fatal step.¹ In revenge she sought his ruin, drove him to rise in self-defence,² and compelled him and his friends to take refuge as exiles in England. Her hands were now free, and she threw off the mask. It was no longer the liberty of Assemblies that was in question; it was the overthrow of the Reformation and the reinstatement of Popery.

¹ Tytler, vi. 390.

² The rising was justified by Murray and his friends on constitutional grounds (Hill Burton, iv. 279, 280).

With singular ability and address she carried out her plans, and in the early months of 1566 she seemed on the very eve of success.¹ The Protestant leaders were in banishment. Darnley had openly gone over to Popery, and the nobles were following. The whole Court influence was in that direction. The Popish Archbishop of St Andrews had his jurisdiction restored. Parliament was summoned for the 6th of March; preparations were made for restoring the Popish prelates to their place in the Legislature; and so confident was Mary of carrying all before her, that it is said Popish altars were being prepared to be set up in St Giles for celebrating mass at the approaching Easter. Never did things look more ominous for the Protestantism of Scotland.

But just at that moment the murder of Rizzio took place; the event fell like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, and all Mary's schemes were shattered. From that day she came under the

¹ It was generally believed at the time that she had put her hand to "the infamous Treaty of Bayonne" for the extirpation of Protestants. There seems no doubt that, whether she signed it or not, she sent an envoy from Scotland to Bayonne, who placed himself in alliance with Philip and "his destroying General Alva" during the conference (Hill Burton, iv. 291, 295).

fatal influence of the Earl of Bothwell,¹ and her subsequent course was one long sorrowful career, in which her sad life was shipwrecked. On this we need not dwell. It only concerns us to note that on the 24th day of July 1567 Mary abdicated in favour of her infant son.

A Regency was required, and the eyes of the nation with one consent turned to the Earl of Murray, whom Mary named as Regent at her abdication. He was absent on the Continent; the nobles sent a deputation urging him to accept the office, but instead of grasping at it he delayed till he should have seen his sister. They met at Lochleven;² different accounts are given of what passed. The result, however, was that he saw it his duty to take the reins of government into his hands.³

Immediately the whole kingdom felt the change. A time of peace and prosperity began such as Scotland for many a day had not seen. First of all the Church felt the benefit. When Parliament met Knox preached the opening ser-

¹ It had begun before (Hill Burton, iv. 286; *see also* p. 324).

² *Ibid.* v. 10-12.

³ "The Lords were glad they had gotten him, a man so well beloved of the people" (Calderwood's Hist. ii. 385).

mon, and at once the Acts of 1560 were ratified establishing the Reformation and abolishing the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome "called the Paip, which has been very hurtful and prejudicial to our Sovereign's authority and the common weal of this realm."

The Parliament ratified anew the Confession of Faith. They settled the terms of the coronation oath, binding the sovereign to the Protestant religion. They ordered some adequate provision to be made for the support of the ministry, giving them the first claim on the thirds of the benefices.¹ But what most concerns us at present is that they enacted that "no other jurisdiction ecclesiastical within this realm be acknowledged than that which is, and shall be within the same Kirk established

¹ There was great need for this being done. In the Register of the Privy Council it is stated (vol. i. p. 574) that the preaching of the Word of God was decayed in default of the needful sustentation of the appointed ministrie. Their incomes were of the narrowest, and were often unpaid. "The greatest number of us have lived in great penury without any stipend some twelve months, some eight, some half a year, having nothing in the meantime to sustain ourselves and families but that which friends have given us" (David Ferguson of Dumfermline, quoted by Hill Burton, *Hist.* v. 406). In 1566 it is said (Petrie's *Hist.* 363), "All the ministers that year were frustrat of their livings." In such

presently, or which floweth therefrom concerning preaching the Word, correction of manners, and administration of the sacraments.”¹ A commission was further appointed to consider more fully what other points or causes should pertain to the jurisdiction of the said Kirk. All these acts at once received the royal assent through the Regent, and became part of the statute law of Scotland.

Now in the settlement of 1567 there are certain points to be noted in connection with the question of the Church's Spiritual Independence.

1. Parliament did not claim to confer jurisdiction on the Church. They merely acknowledged in legal form the jurisdiction already belonging to her. For seven years the Church

circumstances the General Assembly “in consideration of the Law of God, ordaines the persons who heares the doctrine of salvation at the mouthes of His ministers, and thereby receives special food to the nourishment of their souls, to communicate temporal sustentation on their preachers . . . but to take from others contrare to their will whom they serve not, they judge it not their duty, nor yet reasonable” (Book of Univ. Kirk, pp. 46, 47). In 1578 the parishioners of Bolton state that “thir diverse yeiris bigane they had sustenit their awin minister for the maist part thaimselfis” (Reg. Priv. Council, iii. 95).

¹ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 390.

in her inherent right has exercised her jurisdiction in her own affairs. Parliament comes forward, and declares that there shall be no other than this, which it finds already in force.

2. When the Assembly met after Parliament rose, the Act which had been passed in their favour does not make the least difference in their proceedings. No doubt, they felt that the law was now on their side, but they are quite unaffected by the change. The Church is the same, the jurisdiction is the same, and they go on doing just as they had done for seven years, neither less nor more. All along, she had gone forward under the frown of the sovereign and the Court, in the fearless consciousness that she had a Divine right to do what she was doing. Now that Parliament is on her side, and the law has been ratified, there is not on her part the shadow of any claim to greater authority.

3. On the other hand, she had parted with none of her inherent Spiritual Jurisdiction, just as she had received no increase of that jurisdiction. Those who hold that there can be no establishment of the Church without her having to make a sacrifice of her jurisdiction, will not find anything to support their views in what was then

done. Patronage indeed was retained, but even in that the State recognised very remarkably the Church's Spiritual Independence. The examination and admission of ministers is to "be only in the power of the kirk," and if any dispute shall arise, the cause "shall tak end as they" [the General Assembly] "shall decern and declare." Nothing could be more decisive.

4. Let us look, however, at the seven years' work of this spiritually independent Church. Reverting to the time when Knox said, "Take from us the freedom of Assembly, and take from us the Evangel," we saw how, for the Gospel's sake, he succeeded in retaining the freedom of the Church and the freedom of Assemblies. And now, we may ask what he has made of it? What has this freedom done for the Church and for Scotland?

The progress had been nothing less than marvellous. In 1560 there were only six ministers at the Assembly, and only twelve in all Scotland. Seven years afterwards, in 1567, there were, it is authoritatively stated, 252 ministers, and they were assisted by 154 exhorters and 467 readers; in all, 873 men engaged in the religious instruction of the people. It spoke

volumes for the energy with which Knox and his friends had thrown themselves into the work,¹ but it showed no less the vital importance of that Spiritual Independence of the Church for which Knox had contended. The Assembly was free, the Church was free; her whole influence was brought to bear, and, most important of all, men were filled with the consciousness that the authority which the Church wielded was held direct from Heaven. Not as if she claimed to be infallible, but she felt she was acting as under the eye of her Divine Head and with His support. In God's name they set up their banners, as members of a Church resolved to act under His guidance, and by His authority.

¹ There must at the same time have been great practical wisdom in the methods used. The first Book of Discipline indicates one of Knox's arrangements. Every congregation was to meet once a week for the reading and exposition of the Bible, "at the which time it is lawful for every man to speak or enquire as God shall move his heart." Difficulties are to be referred to ministers and elders (Calderwood's Hist. ii. 56).

As the Laity were thus encouraged to take part in these meetings, men who had naturally the power of speaking with effect would come to be known, and would be selected and prepared for the work of the Church.

See an interesting pamphlet by the Rev. James Gall, on "John Knox's Open Bible Readings." Edinburgh 1882.

This conviction gave her strength of purpose, and she rose up girt with an energy which was felt all over the land. One cannot look on this without recognising the vital importance of the Church's Spiritual Independence under Christ her only Head. Knox knew what he was doing when he contended for it as matter of life or death. A Church unhampered by Erastian control—looking up to Christ, and conscious that in all she was doing it was on Christ's authority she depended—that was the Church which Knox was determined to have; and that was what gave such marvellous energy to her operations, and enabled her to do for Scotland what she did. Let us add that faithfulness and loyalty to her Divine Head brought the blessing from on high, and crowned her efforts with such signal success. The promise was fulfilled, "Them that honour Me I will honour."

LECTURE II.

1567-1592.

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DURING the twenty-five years which we are now to consider there was a continual struggle between the State and the Church, victory inclining now to the one side and now to the other. There were the black Acts of 1584, when in regard to the Church's Spiritual Independence all seemed to be lost; and in the end there was the great Act of 1592, the Charter of the Church, when her cause seemed to be gained. Between these two extremes the course of the history moves.

The short Regency of the Earl of Murray at the outset did much for Scotland, promising a bright future of national prosperity and peace. For the Church he did what he could. There were difficulties in dealing with his own supporters; but if he had lived, an adequate income would no doubt have been provided for the ministers.¹

¹ M'Crie, Knox, ii. 160.

The three years of his government, however, all too soon came to an end. When he fell on the streets of Linlithgow (23rd January 1570) by the hand of an assassin (a man whose life he had spared),¹ all Scotland mourned his death as a national calamity. To Knox the blow was specially severe ; it broke his health, and hastened his end.

The young king was a child in his fourth year, and the Regency had to be continued, first under the Earl of Lennox, then under Mar, and lastly under the Earl of Morton ; but Morton all along was the ruling spirit, and the Church had a hard time of it in defence of her Spiritual Independence. What brought them into collision was Morton's favourite plan for making Tulchan Bishops, in order that through them the nobles—by no means forgetting himself—might seize on the patrimony of the Church.

At the Reformation the Popish Church was enormously rich, holding, there is reason to believe, fully one-half of the whole property in the kingdom. After the Popish jurisdiction was abolished the Romish dignitaries were allowed to

¹ Calderwood's Hist. ii. 510 ; M'Crie, Knox, ii. 165.

retain two-thirds of their benefices for life. As years went on these fat livings began to fall vacant, and the hungry courtiers were on the watch to struggle for them. The plan was to get from the crown a grant of the living, then to get some needy minister to act as titular Bishop, on an agreement that he should draw the revenues and hand over the greater part of the money to the real holder, some greedy nobleman.¹

But here the question of the Church's jurisdiction came in. It was bad enough to see the Church's money sacrificed, instead of being given, as Knox proposed, for the education of the country, for the poor, and for the support of the ministry. The loss was mortifying, but it was worse when the whole spiritual jurisdiction of the Church came to be at stake. For example, the Archbishopric of St Andrews fell vacant—the King's party had just taken the Archbishop and hanged him in his robes. It was the richest see in the kingdom; Morton got a grant of it, and found a Mr Douglas, one of the ministers of

¹ "Every Lord got a Bishopric, and sought and presented to the Kirk sic a man as wald be content with least and set them maist of tacks, feus, and pensions" (James Melville's Diary, p. 31).

St Andrews, to act as Archbishop, handing over the greater part of the money. In this proceeding he found large support among the nobles and members of Parliament, for they were themselves waiting to scramble on the same terms for the next livings which should fall vacant.

But the fatal obstacle was that the Church was Presbyterian. Her constitution as laid down in the Book of Discipline had no place for Bishops, titular or otherwise.¹ She had deliberately resolved on this. Had the State then the right to alter her constitution, and compel her to receive an Archbishop against her will? Here she took her stand, and she was firm. First protesting to Parliament² against the whole transaction, the Church forbade Douglas to accept the office, or to take his seat, on

¹ Some Episcopalian writers would fain have it believed that the Superintendents were really Bishops. It is a vain idea. The form of ordination in their case was the same with that of other Presbyterian Ministers. They were subject to the General Assembly, many of whose members were laymen, and they were often called to account sharply enough.

² On that occasion "the ministers were called proud knaves, and received many injurious words from the Lords, specially from Morton, who ruled all. He said he would lay their pride, and put order to them" (Calderwood's Hist. iii. 137, 138).

pain of excommunication. Parliament, on the other hand, led by Morton, ordered him to take his seat as Archbishop, and vote, on pain of treason.¹ Douglas stood between two fires. If he acted as Archbishop, he would be excommunicated by the Church, and become an outlaw. If he refrained, he would be found guilty of treason. The two jurisdictions, civil and ecclesiastical, had him between them, and he might take his choice to be either excommunicated and an outlaw, or to be condemned as a traitor. Morton, however, found he had gone too far in driving matters to this point. He yielded for the moment.² The Church had stood firm, and was successful in her first encounter. She had saved her independence.

¹ Principal Lee's Lectures, ii. 2.

² This was due—in part at least—to the interposition of Erskine of Dun, whose views were not extreme, but who was one of the most influential of the early Reformers. On this occasion he wrote to the Regent, and his interference must have been all the more effectual, because Regent Mar was the head of the family—the Erskines—to which he belonged. His letter deserves to be carefully considered; it is one of the clearest utterances in all Scottish history on the two jurisdictions, the civil and the ecclesiastical:—

“There is a Spiritual jurisdiction and power which God has given unto His Kirk and to these who beare office therein, and there is a temporal power given of God to civil magistrats Both the powers are of God, and most agreeing to the fortifieing

But Morton was a formidable opponent. He will overthrow the power of the Assembly, and the very constitution of the Church, rather than miss the revenues of the Archbishopric; and he will do this by gaining over the Church herself, and making her a consenting party to her own defeat. In this very change of front, indeed, he did homage to her spiritual independence. So long as she said No, he was powerless, and Parliament was powerless. His only way was to get her to say Yes.

And unfortunately he knew how to do it. Knox was near his end, and unable to act. Melville had not yet come back from Geneva. The good men who guided the Councils of the Church wanted nerve, and Morton was too much

one of another, if they be right used. But when corruption of man entereth in, confounding the offices, usurping to himself what he pleaseth, nothing regarding the good order appointed of God, then confusion followeth in all estates. . . . For the better understanding of this matter Christ hath given forth a rule which ought to be weighed of magistrates and of all people, saying, 'Give to Cæsar that perteaneth to Cæsar, and to God that perteaneth to God.' The Kirk of God sould fortifie all lawful power and authority that pertaineth to the Civill Magistrat, because it is the ordinance of God. But if he pass the bounds of his office . . . then the servants of God sould withstand his unjust enterprise" (Calderwood's Hist. iii. 156-158).

for them. He represented that things were coming to a deadlock. He expressed a strong desire to have these ecclesiastical affairs fully considered, and some of the ministers and Privy Councillors—pliable men—were invited to meet at Leith in 1572. He first got this Leith Convention, as it was called, to vote itself a General Assembly, a step utterly incompetent. Then assuming that they had full authority, they delegated their power to a small Committee. On that Committee the whole influence of the Court was brought to bear, and the result was the passing of certain resolutions to the effect that *till the King came of age* the titles of Bishops and Archbishops might be allowed to remain, giving them however no real Episcopal standing in the Church, and placing them under the control of the General Assembly, of which laymen constituted a great part. It was a mongrel system, to which Morton got them to submit as a temporary expedient.¹

On all sides the arrangement was disliked. No minister who had any self-respect would accept the office of Bishop on these terms. It

¹ "An Interim until further and more perfect order be obtained" (Hill Burton, v. 316).

was a mean thing for a Presbyterian minister to wear a kind of sham episcopal dignity in order that some rapacious nobleman might get the living. Public opinion expressed itself in various ways.

One sharp saying by Adamson,¹ minister of St Andrew's, made a deep impression. There were three sorts of Bishops, he said, "My Lord Bishop, My Lord's Bishop, and the Lord's Bishop. My Lord Bishop that was in the Papistry; My Lord's Bishop, that is, now when My Lord gets the benefice and the Bishop only serves to make his title sure; and the Lord's Bishop is the true minister of the Gospel." There was another well-known title still more expressive of contempt; they were Tulchan Bishops, the people said. In Scotland at that time it appears that the stuffed skin of a calf—a Tulchan—was set beside a cow at milking-time, to induce her more freely to give her milk. So with this kind of Bishop. He was employed like the stuffed calf-skin, and the object was to enable some noble Lord to milk the cow—the Church. The grim humour of the comparison

¹ James Melville's Diary, p. 32.

made the name stick, and marked the contempt with which the transaction was regarded.

For all this, however, Morton cared little. It was no matter to him what kind of Bishop Douglas might be. He was good enough to serve his purpose.

But there were things that even Morton must have felt when the Church's Independence began to assert itself. Douglas was to be installed Archbishop of St Andrews, and Morton had actually the assurance to ask Knox to officiate on the occasion. This was too much. Old and frail as the Reformer was, he not only refused, but from the pulpit he thundered forth once more both against Morton and Douglas.¹ Within a month afterwards, when the Assembly met at St Andrews, we find that Knox "opposed himself to the making of Bishops." We find also that the Church was awaking to the evils of the Leith Convention, and was taking steps to prepare the Second Book of Discipline, thus to bring order out of confusion.²

In 1574 an important event took place.

¹ M'Crie's Life of Knox, ii. 204, 205.

² March 1574. This was before the arrival of Melville on the scene (Calderwood, iii. 307, 328).

Andrew Melville arrived from the Continent in the beginning of July. Already the Church was decided enough in her views, but Knox was in his grave, and some man was needed with force of character to meet the difficulties of the position. Melville came with a great Continental reputation, as standing in the first rank of European scholarship. But Scotland soon found he was far more than this. He was a man of action, prepared to bear himself with a fearless intrepidity hardly inferior to that of Knox himself.

Immediately after Melville's arrival Douglas, in going to the pulpit, dropped down dead, and the Archbishopric was again vacant. Adamson, the zealous Presbyterian, who had satirised the three different kinds of bishops, consented to accept the appointment, and himself became "My Lord's Archbishop," the nominee of Morton. It had been agreed between them that Adamson should refuse to be subject to the Assembly, and should set them at defiance. The Earl was in haste to get his hands on the money.

But the Church was firm. Adamson was summoned before a commission to answer for usurping the title and deserting his Church. His case must go up to next Assembly, and

meantime he is forbid to call himself Archbishop.

Obviously the Church and State were engaged in a determined struggle. Morton, now Regent, was at the height of his power, with all the force of the kingdom at his back, but so domineering that men were already asking how long it would be possible to endure him. It was about that time he held a memorable interview with Melville. In all these contendings, when the Church began to resist him, he knew well whose hand was at work threatening to stop the money. Melville, therefore, was sent for, and Morton did his best to overbear him. The debate was carried on somewhat to the following effect :¹—

First, Morton began by denouncing the men who broke the peace of the Church and the country, by introducing foreign ideas on points of Church Government.

Melville answered that this was not so—not foreign ideas. We go by the Word of God alone.

But the Assembly is a convocation of the King's lieges, and it is treason for them to meet without his permission.

¹ Melville's Diary, p. 68.

This was not so, Melville again replied. — Were Christ and his apostles guilty of treason when they brought together hundreds and thousands with no permission of the Magistrate, as may be seen in the Acts of the Apostles?

Then Morton, losing patience, broke out “tauntinglie,” “Read ye ever such an act as we did at St Johnston’s” [Perth]—referring to the resistance of the Lords of the Congregation.

“My Lord,” said Melville, “if ye be ashamed of that act, Christ will be ashamed of you.”

Morton was roused, and growled out, exclaiming in a tone of angry menace which, as Dr M’Crie says, few in Scotland could have heard without alarm, “There will never be quietness in this country till half-a-dozen of you are hung or banished.”¹

“Tush, sir,” replied Melville, “threaten your courtiers in that manner, *purpuratis tuis ista minitare*. I have been ready to give my life

¹ M’Crie, Life of Melville, 194-196. Two poets had lampooned Morton, and in reply he had them both hanged. A minister at Leith who censured him was silenced in the same way. There were other cases, in which he applied the same remedy to those who offended him (Cunningham’s Hist. of Church, i. 449. Chambers’ Domestic Annals, pp. 61, 79, 126).

where it would not have been half so 'weill wared.' Let God be glorified, it will not be in your power to hang or exile His truth."

And so the conference ended, leaving Morton, we may believe, in no very enviable frame of mind.

We must now refer to the "Second Book of Discipline," one of the most important documents in the history of those times. The Church had been driven to it by the Leith Convention; her government must be put on a clear footing. The proposal hung fire, however, till Melville took it in hand. In 1576 the committee appointed to carry out this business was enlarged. Four sub-committees were formed. There were numerous conferences, the whole was matured and approved by the General Assembly, April 1578,¹ and it only remained to get the assent of Parliament. At first there were good hopes. The book, indeed, was all but approved by the Privy Council,² but a change came. The rival politicians, who had

¹ Book of Univ. Kirk, pp. 175, 176. McCrie, *Life of Melville*, i. 163-165.

² Spottswood's *Hist.* pp. 289, 302.

been courting the favour of the Church, had agreed, and both turned against her.¹

The Church, however, still continued to press the matter, till at last she got impatient, and resolved to act on her own authority. The General Assembly solemnly enacted the "Book of Discipline" as one of the Standards of the Church, directed it to be registered among the Acts, ordered the Presbyteries which had just been erected each to provide themselves with a copy,² and all ministers to sign it on pain of excommunication. This was done in right of her own spiritual authority. No matter whether Parliament ratified it or refused it. It was solemnly enacted as the standard by which thenceforward the Church is to regulate her own procedure according to the mind of Christ.

As to the book itself, it cut up Episcopacy root and branch, and established the Presbyterian system in its complete form. But what concerns us is the care with which it defines the civil and spiritual jurisdictions, their agreement and their differences. There are four short sections of

¹ M'Crie's *Melville*, i. 193. *Register of Privy Council*, iii. 431-433.

² *Book of the Universal Kirk*, p. 218.

Chapter I., which indicate the view taken of these subjects. In terms so plain that he who runs may read, the two provinces are marked out—the civil and the ecclesiastical—the whole being made to rest on the authority of the Bible and the rules of administration which Scripture seems to warrant.¹

The system of Church Government was now settled. Not only was the office of Bishop abolished (1580) by a unanimous vote, but all persons holding “the said pretended office” were ordered at once to resign,² which the whole of the Bishops did in the course of that year, with the exception of five.³ In 1581 the Assembly, on the invitation of the King,⁴ set up thirteen Presbyteries. Thus the Church had put her

¹ Dr Hill Burton gives it as his opinion that in preparing this book Melville showed “a finer sense of decorum” than Knox, and more “logical aptness.” “To those who have a partiality for the triumphs of logical definition and arrangement, the Second Book might be an acceptable study” (Hill Burton’s Hist. v. 469).

² Calderwood’s Hist. iii. 469.

³ The minutes recording their submission were torn out of the Record by the Archbishop of St Andrews (Principal Lee’s Lectures, ii. 19).

⁴ There were previous indications that the Church was going to do it on her own authority (Book of Univ. Kirk., p. 192. Register of Privy Council, vol. iii., xxiv.-v.).

house in order, and it was full time, for days of trial were at hand.

When the young King mounted the throne, he unfortunately put himself into the hands of two favourites, who soon taught him to forget the lessons of George Buchanan. The least objectionable of the two was a relative of his own, Esmé Stewart, whom the Guises had sent over from Paris to restore, if possible, French influence in Scotland. He was first made Earl and then Duke of Lennox. A worse adviser was Captain James Stewart, created Earl of Arran, a dangerous man,¹ who set himself to corrupt the young King—a boy of twelve—and lead him into all evil. Having James completely under their influence, these two, for their own ends, resolved to make him absolute ruler both in Church and State. The Church was the only power in the country able to resist them, and it was on the General Assembly that the brunt of the battle fell.

Still it was the old question of Tulchan Episcopacy that first came into view. In June 1581 Archbishop Boyd of Glasgow died. Lennox got

¹ "An audacious profligate" (Principal Lee, ii. 77).

a grant of the living, and appointed as his nominee Montgomery, a weak man, who was minister of Stirling. The Assembly called him to the bar, put him on his trial, prohibited him meantime from accepting the office, and remitted the case to the Synod. And now at this point there arose a determined trial of strength between the Church and State—Royal Supremacy against Spiritual Independence.

The members of the Synod were summoned before the King in Council, to answer for having interfered with Montgomery. They simply declined the Council's jurisdiction in things spiritual. The scene must have been a strange one at Stirling, when the young King was much moved, "and not far from tears," as Durie,¹ one of the Edinburgh ministers, addressed him, warning him against the course he was pursuing under the advice of evil counsellors, and reminding him that "the welfare of the Kirk" was his "welfare."

A still more striking scene was witnessed next year at St Andrews when the Assembly met, and the King sent a letter charging them to let

¹ Calderwood's Hist. iii. 597.

Montgomery alone. They agreed that none of his civil rights should be interfered with, but in things ecclesiastical they would do their duty. Then a messenger-at-arms appeared, and in the King's name charged them to stop on pain of rebellion. With all due respect, they sent a second reply in similar terms, and quietly went on to try the case. Various articles of charge were found proved, but before pronouncing sentence they sent a deputation to deal with Montgomery. At a private interview they conferred and prayed with him, and after prayer, as they reported, "he sat still a pretty space on his knees,¹ then he riseth and saith, 'Get me my cloak, I will go with you to the Assembly.' But when he came to the College Close 'loth was he to go in.'" They left him accordingly to take his own course, but the end was, as they express it, that "after long relutation" he came and confessed his faults, and promised before God and the Assembly that he would "meddle no further concerning the Archbishopric of Glasgow."

The Assembly, however, were doubtful of him. They directed the Presbytery of Glasgow to

¹ Calderwood's Hist. iii. 599-605.

watch his movements, and if he showed signs of retracting they must report him to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, who were authorised to excommunicate him. So it fell out. He was found soon afterwards trying to get the Archbishopric,¹ and the Presbytery of Glasgow took up the case. Strange scenes followed. The Provost of Glasgow, with his Bailies and some others, interrupted the Presbytery, dragged the Moderator out of the chair, "smote him on the face, pulled him," we read, "by the beard, beated out one of his teeth, and put him in the Tolbooth."² The Presbytery calmly went on with the business. They reported Montgomery to the Presbytery of Edinburgh, by whom he was excommunicated, and the sentence publicly intimated in the churches.³

¹ He changed his mind "how soon he returned to the Court and perceived the King's countenance cast down upon him for that he had done" (Spottswood Hist. p. 319).

² Calderwood's Hist. iii. 621.

³ Public feeling seems to have been very adverse to him. After his excommunication, his appearance on the streets of Edinburgh caused great commotion. He was "onbeset" and "hued out by flinging of stones at him out at the Kirk of Field port." Even the King had no real respect for him. When James heard what had taken place "he lay down on the Inch at Perth not able to conteane himself for laughter, and said he was a seditious loun" (Calderwood's Hist. iii. 634; Chambers' Domestic Annals, i. 149).

The Provost of Glasgow had next to be dealt with. The Assembly summoned him, he failed to appear, but the Church was in earnest. Full enquiry was made, his offence was proved, and along with others he was found liable to excommunication, which was equivalent to outlawry. The Provost began to feel it was a serious thing to use violence against a Court of the Church. It would never do for the Provost of Glasgow to be an outlaw; he came forward and made his submission, in such terms that the end was served, the authority of the Church had been vindicated.¹

In the meantime Montgomery's case was becoming formidable. The King and Council proclaimed the Church's sentence of excommunication null² and void, and ordered all men under a severe penalty to pay him his dues as their Bishop. A meeting of Assembly was at once summoned *pro re nata*, and Melville from the chair denounced this new Popedom, the King claiming supremacy both in Church and State. A paper of grievances was drawn up demanding redress, and Melville, at the head of a deputation,

¹ Calderwood's Hist. iii. 688.

² *Ibid.* iii. 631.

was sent to present it to the King at Perth. He was warned it would be at the risk of his life, but he simply replied that he was not afraid. Accordingly, at the head of a deputation, he entered the royal presence, and brought the protest before the King and his Council.¹ The courtiers were enraged, and Arran, the favourite, looking fiercely round, demanded, "Who dare sign these treasonable articles?" "We dare," said Melville, and stepping forward he took the pen and affixed his signature, all the Commissioners following his example.² For the moment the Council was reduced to silence.

The whole liberties of Scotland, civil as well as ecclesiastical, were at that time in danger, and if the danger passed, it was due in no small degree to the Church, and her determined adherence to her own Spiritual Independence. The two Court favourites were bent on establishing absolute

¹ M'Crie's Life of Melville, i. 272, 273.

² The scene is best described in the words of James Melville : "When they cam before the Council, Arran begins to threaten with thrawn brow and boasting language. What ! says he, wha daur subscryve thir treasonable articles. Mr Andrew answers We daur, and withal starts to, and taks the pen fra the clerk, subscryves and calls to his brethren, who all cam and subscryvit" (Melville's Diary, p. 133).

government,¹ and were carrying all before them. As for Parliament and the Privy Council, they were tools in the hands of Lennox and Arran, but the Church stood in the breach, and she did so because her Spiritual Independence was at stake. In worldly politics men may give and take. Even in regard to national liberty, the liberty of the subject, there may be a question of compromise; but when the secular arm would put down the sacred authority which the Church holds from Christ, she has no choice. Loyalty to Christ her Head is an absolute necessity. Hence that scene at Perth. In defence of the Headship of Christ Melville could look in the face all the powers of earth and say, "We dare." When nobles and statesmen were truckling to the influence which threatened to enslave the country, the Church, in the consciousness of her Heaven-given responsibility, was fearless, and her example roused the nation to a sense of what was going on. The liberties of the people were saved, but it was the Church which led the way, and the

¹ Esimé Stewart, Duke of Lennox, could tell James how the French King was supreme and absolute, and instil into his mind the doctrines of divine right and passive obedience (Hill Burton, v. 427).

Church was firm because her Spiritual Independence and her fidelity to Christ were at stake.

Our Scottish forefathers, it must be admitted, were rough in their methods. The Raid of Ruthven took place. The nobles seized the King, held possession of him in the Castle of Ruthven, drove Lennox, one of the favourites, away to France, where he died, and shut up Arran, the other favourite, for a time in confinement. After ten months, however, James regained his liberty, Arran was reinstated, the nobles concerned in seizing the King were declared traitors, and had to flee the kingdom. The weight of his displeasure fell on the Church, and especially on Melville, who was put on his trial for a sermon he had preached. He declined the civil jurisdiction of the Privy Council, claiming to be tried first by the Courts of the Church, to whom he was primarily responsible for anything he said in the pulpit.¹ After the decision of the Church was given, the civil court

¹ "The whilk [declinature] when the King and Captain James [Arran] . . . with roarings of lions and messages of death had taken so hot that all the Council and Court of the palace were filled with fear. . . . Mr Andro never jarging [flinching] nor dashed a whit . . . plainly told the King and Council that

might try him for any supposed offence, political or civil.¹ The result was that this declinature was itself made a crime. He was condemned and ordered to prison at Blackness. As that prison, however, was in the charge of an agent of Arran, his great enemy, the world knew well what that meant. Melville was in Edinburgh. His friends warned him—some of them using the expressive proverb, “Loose and living.” Melville, in company with his brother Roger, quietly “slipped out at the Port,” and went off, but not to Blackness. He turned his course towards Berwick, where he put himself under the protection of Elizabeth.²

James and Arran now had their hands free, Melville and the leading nobles being in banish-

they presumed overboldly . . . to tak on them to judge doctrine.” And that ye may see your weakness and rashness in taking upon you what ye neither can nor ought to do, lowsing a little Hebrew Byble from his belt and clanking it down on the burd, these, he said, are my instructions, see if any of you can judge of them” (Melville’s Diary, 142).

¹ This should be carefully noted. The Church never claimed that her decision should bar the civil authorities from trying the case before their own tribunals, as affecting civil or political interests. Her only contention was that a minister was responsible in the first instance to the courts of the Church for what he said during divine service in the pulpit.

² *Ibid.* 144.

ment. Parliament was called in May 1584, and the whole of the previous legislation in favour of the Church was overthrown. It was made treason henceforth to decline the King's jurisdiction in any question, however spiritual. No Church Court was to meet without his express permission. It was treason to speak against the Bishops as one of the Estates in Parliament. Presbyteries were abolished, and the Bishops were to have full authority in their dioceses.

These were known as the Black Acts of 1584, which subverted the Presbyterian Church, and placed the liberties of the nation under the feet of the King. No wonder that Parliament, in passing them, met with closed doors. But though the ministers found themselves locked out, some hint had got abroad of what was intended, and three of their leading men, Pont, Balcanqual, and Lawson, went to the cross when the Acts were being proclaimed, and having taken a formal public protest, so as to suspend their legal force, they instantly disappeared, going off to England.¹ Arran was enraged, publicly stormed against the three protestors, and especially against Lawson,

¹ Pont thus lost his office as Lord of Session, which he had held.

Knox's successor at Edinburgh, declaring that he would yet "make his head leap from his halse." It was going to be a life or death struggle, in which the courtiers were resolved to crush the Church and her spiritual independence.

But here James' statecraft also came into action. All ministers must within forty days sign a bond engaging to carry out the Black Acts, on pain of losing their stipends. At first men generally refused. On the suggestion of Adamson, however, the King introduced a clause stating that they were only to agree to the Bond in so far as it was agreeable to the Word of God,¹ and in this form not a few even of the most faithful signed it. The Church found it was a difficult time. It was ill contending for her spiritual independence against the hostility of James, the overbearing fierceness of Arran, and the unscrupulous craft of Adamson.

But better times were at hand. Arran had overshot the mark. The country was weary of him.² The English Queen saw that the time

¹ "The clause added to sophisticate the bond was repugnant to the matter and argument of it" (Calderwood's Hist. iv. 247).

² The English Ambassador writes, "It is incredible how universally the man is hated by all men of all degrees" (Hill Burton, v. 501).

had come. The banished Lords came back across the border, men flocked to their standard, and they presented themselves at Stirling before the King, at the head of eight thousand men. Arran fled, and disappeared from public life. The King welcomed the Lords, and the whole administration was changed. Melville and his friends were disappointed indeed. The noblemen once more failed the Church, all except the Earl of Angus. They had their own ends to serve. The King, however, was got to recognise the jurisdiction of the Church. An explanation was issued professing to modify the Black Acts of 1584, but it took some time before they were repealed.

It is important to observe that during these years the Church had been again and again trying to have the two jurisdictions, the civil and the spiritual, defined, and she had often done this in circumstances which showed her determination. In 1571, for example, the whole country was in the uproar of civil war. The King's party had stormed Dumbarton Castle and hanged Archbishop Hamilton. The Queen's party, with their cannon thundering from Edinburgh Castle, kept the city in awe. They attacked the Court

at Stirling, and killed the Regent Lennox. Calmly amid the uproar the Church goes on with her purpose. Men might fight as they pleased, and take each other's lives, but here is the sacred question of the Church's jurisdiction, and it must be attended to come what may.

Nor will she suffer any injury to be done which she can prevent. A book was published in Edinburgh, for example, in 1568, on the fall of the Roman Kirk, in which the King was said to have been the Supreme Head of the primitive Church. This was not to be endured. The Assembly ordered the book to be suppressed. Not only must the printer call in every copy, but in all future time he must publish no book on any religious subject without the Church's permission.¹

There were cases also in which the civil and ecclesiastical authorities came in contact with each other, and the Church held her own. In 1570, for example, Robert Hamilton, minister of St Andrews, was brought before the Assembly and charged with preaching objectionable doc-

¹ Book of Univ. Kirk, p. 100.

trine. Three Lords of Session appeared at the Assembly, and declared that the sermon was said to have been treasonable, and they claimed that the Church should leave him to be tried by the Courts of Law. To this the Assembly agreed, so far as the question of treason was concerned, but in regard to the charge of heresy the case belonged to them.¹ Each of the authorities was to deal with the case in its own sphere. It was an example of co-ordinate jurisdiction.

Twenty years afterwards a similar case occurred, in which a similar solution was found. Simpson, one of the ministers of Stirling, was charged with fraud, and the Assembly took it up as a case affecting the character of a minister. The Lord President, however, and two Lords of Session, appeared at the Assembly, and stated that the case had been called in the Court of Session, and the Church ought to sist procedure till the judges had given their decision. The

¹ This indeed was the view taken by the Judges themselves. Their statement to the Assembly, as reported by Petrie, was that "in such things as concern heresy, or properly belong to their jurisdiction, they [the Assembly] may proceed." The Court of Session expected them to do so (Petrie's Hist. Part iii. p. 368).

narrative tells that the Lords were removed till the Assembly should consider the point. Then they were called in and informed that, in so far as the character of a minister was concerned, the Assembly held themselves entitled to go on with the case, not interfering with the competency of the Court of Session in their own department. This, however, was not enough. The Assembly returned to the subject, and after reasoning, "they thought meet that the Lord Justice Clerk should be demanded if he acknowledged the judgment of the Kirk or not, who being called, answered that he acknowledged with reverence the judgment of the Assembly in all causes pertaining to them, but in this case whilk is civil, whereunto the Lords are judges *primario*, they, the Assembly, can not be judges *primario*. After whilk answers his Lordship was removed till the Assembly further adviset, after which they called him in again." This was the way in which the General Assembly dealt with the Judges of the Court of Session in those days, directing them to retire, and calling them back when they were ready for them. Accordingly they called in the Lord Justice Clerk, and "pronounced that they fand themselves judges

primario in this case, and instantly to proceed therein.”¹ Here again was co-ordinate jurisdiction, each Court dealing with the case in its own way, the one to ecclesiastical, and the other to civil effects, and neither interfering beyond its own province. Even in these incidental cases we see the great principle which the Church was determined to uphold.

In 1588 the country was roused by the invasion of the Armada. The King at first seemed to hold back, but the General Assembly at a special meeting appealed to him. Then he joined the whole nation in signing a solemn bond of defence, and the result was that the King and the Church were drawn into more cordial relations to each other.

One proof of this was seen when in 1589 he went to Norway and Denmark to bring home his bride. In his absence he named Robert Bruce, minister of Edinburgh, one of the commissioners to take charge of the government;² and so well

¹ Book of Univ. Kirk, pp. 354, 355.

² It was evidently on Bruce that he placed his chief reliance. Writing from Elsinore in April, the Chancellor says, “I sall do what I can to haste me home to susteane my part lest ye be overcharged. I know since our departure ye susteane a great burthein” (Calderwood’s Hist. v. 93).

were affairs managed in his absence that he declared that Bruce was worth "a quarter of his kingdom." Next year James came back in great good-humour; and when he attended the General Assembly of 1590, he made a speech which fairly carried the house by storm. Melville was Moderator, and had addressed him from the chair. James, in reply, brake forth praising God that he belonged to such a Kirk, the sincerest Kirk in the world. He condemned Geneva for keeping Pasch and Yule; and as for the Kirk of England, its service was nothing but an ill-said mass, wanting nothing of Popery but the liftings. So he ran on, charging his good people to stand by this purity; and "I forsooth as long as I brook life shall maintain the same against all deadly." The Assembly were in raptures, and Calderwood says that for the next quarter of an hour nothing was heard but praying and praising.¹ How far James was sincere it is difficult to say. He dearly loved to hear himself speak. He knew what would please the audience, and may have wished the luxury of a full tribute of applause. But it would be unfair to deny that in his life

¹ Calderwood's Hist. v. 106.

there are occasions—lucid intervals¹—when his better feelings seemed to get the mastery. The true value of that glowing address, however, events were soon to show.

In the meantime all went well. The younger Maitland of Lethington (John Maitland) was the King's trusted adviser.² He saw that the influence of the Church was increasing. For seventeen years Melville had been in charge of the Universities of Glasgow and St Andrews. Young men of talent had flocked to his classes, and had been trained as students never were trained in Scotland before. The recently settled ministers were of this class, and were making their influence everywhere felt.³ Besides, it so happened that the support of the Church at that time was needed both by Maitland and the King. A nobleman had just been murdered—"the bonny Earl of Murray," as people called him. Suspicion

¹ See another example in the Assembly at Burntisland in 1601. One would be sorry to think that his appearance on that occasion was an act of hypocrisy.

² James complains—*more suo*—of the reports that were spread abroad about Maitland. Men say he is "leading me by the nose . . . as giff I were an unreasonable creatur or a barne that could do nathing of myself" (Register Privy Council, vol. iv. p. xlvi.).

³ Principal Lee's Lectures, ii. 117.

fell both on Maitland and the King of having been concerned somehow in it, and the leniency with which the murderers were punished raised no small indignation. It was needful to conciliate the Church, and to this in some measure may be ascribed the wonderful turn which affairs took in 1592. In May the Assembly met, with Bruce as Moderator, and resolved once more to lay their requests before the King and Parliament. At last they met with a favourable response. Under Maitland's guidance, Parliament passed the great Act of 1592.¹

It ratified the leading portions of the Book of Discipline; it annulled the Black Acts of 1584 in regard to royal supremacy and episcopacy, and in doing so acknowledged the Spiritual Jurisdiction of the Church as already existing. It recognised the full power of Presbyteries and the other courts of the Church to settle all ecclesiastical affairs. Though it did not completely

¹ The Act abrogates and annuls all previous Acts "tending to the prejudice of the liberty of the true Kirk of God presently professed within this realm, *jurisdiction* and discipline thereof." These previous Acts "sall na wayes be prejudicial nor derogat to the privilege that God has gevin to the spiritual office-bearers in the Kirk" (see Acts of Scots Parliament in Compendium of the Laws of the Church of Scotland, pp. 13, 14).

meet the views of the Church, it went very far in that direction—so far that it has been styled the Charter of the Church of Scotland.

In regard to the Spiritual Independence of the Church it is specially important ; it acknowledged her jurisdiction as already in force, not that she had held it or was henceforth to hold it on the ground of any civil enactment. It was already hers by divine right and by use and wont. An Act of Parliament was certainly needed to repel and cancel the attack on her jurisdiction which previous Acts had made. But Parliament acknowledged the jurisdiction itself which she held and had already exercised as being her inherent right, derived from her Divine Head.

How she had claimed this Independence and striven to make it good, we have seen during the preceding years.

When the first time of conflict ended in 1567, the Confession of Faith was recognised, and firm ground seemed to have been reached. In this Lecture we have rapidly followed the course of events since 1567, till at last in the Act of 1592 firm ground was again reached—firmer and more advanced than in 1567. The passing of that Act was indeed an event of the utmost

importance. Not that the Church took her constitution or derived her authority from any earthly source, she claimed that the Bible was her only rule, and that the jurisdiction which she wielded was the gift of her Divine Head. But that Act of Parliament was thus far the Charter of the Church's liberties, that it enabled her, without hindrance from adverse external influences, to exercise her inherent spiritual functions. These were benefits for which the Church might well be thankful. The fight had been hard, but God had crowned her efforts with success. She held a recognised position in view of the world, and could go on her course unchallenged, exercising the spiritual authority and performing the sacred functions of a Scripturally constituted Church. The consciousness of having, under the providence of God, reached such a position might well fill her with gratitude, and make her feel in those days of trial, which were not far off, that if she only continued faithful to her Divine Head, He would be faithful to her in the future as He had been in the past. She thanked God and took courage.

LECTURE III.

1592-1649.

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1592-1649.

THE great Act of 1592, which did so much to place the Church in her right position, had unfortunately two serious defects. First, it retained the system of Patronage, with a binding and astringing clause, used long afterwards with fatal effect in the Ten Years' Conflict. It was one of the causes which led to the Disruption of 1843, owing to its being interpreted in a sense which there is good reason to believe it was never meant to bear at the time it was enacted.

The second blemish was that the Act reserved to the King the power, under certain limitations, of calling the General Assembly, and this immediately proved a serious bone of contention. Ultimately, in the hands of James and Charles, it was found to involve the whole question of Royal Supremacy as against the Church's Spiritual Independence.

The first struggle came in connection with Popery. Four years after the invasion of the Spanish Armada, Scotland was again startled with news of an impending assault. A conspiracy had been formed among the Scottish Roman Catholics, with the Earls of Huntly, Errol, and Angus at their head, and they had such support from abroad as threatened real danger. Popery at that time was greatly dreaded. Not long before, the Massacre of St Bartholomew had sent a thrill of horror through Europe. The Scottish Church was resolved to meet the danger in earnest; they excommunicated the Earls.¹ The King, on the other hand, seemed to be trifling with the subject, first condemning the Popish lords, then pardoning, and then favouring them. At last the Church resolved to make common cause with an influential convention of the laity, who met in Fife, and determined to interview the King at Falkland.

In this conference² James assumed at first a

¹ The sentence was pronounced by the Synod of Fife, but "God so blessed the work that the whole Kirk of Scotland approved the same, and it was a special means of preventing extreme danger" (Calderwood's Hist. v. 263).

² October 1596. Melville's Diary, p. 370.

haughty tone, and tried to browbeat the deputation, but Andrew Melville stepped forward. Seizing him by the sleeve, he called him "God's silly vassal." As they were now in private, they must let him know their minds, and before all else he is made to hear about the Spiritual Independence of the Church. "Sir, I must tell you there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. There is King James, the head of the commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and in whose kingdom he is not a king nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. We will yield you your place, and give you all due obedience, but again I say you are not the head of the Church. . . . Sir, when you were in your swaddling clothes, Christ Jesus reigned freely in this land, in spite of all His enemies." James knew that it was time to yield, and he listened respectfully. These wholesome but unpleasant truths, fearlessly spoken, quelled him for the moment, and he promised to deal more stringently with the Popish lords.

Soon, however, his mood changed. At a second interview, with another deputation, he told them there would never be peace in the

land till the marches were "rid" between the two jurisdictions of Church and State. His idea of riding the marches was that these three points must be conceded to him: 1. The General Assembly must never meet without his permission; 2. No act or law of the Church should be valid till ratified by himself, the same as if it were an Act of Parliament; and 3. No minister must refer in the pulpit to any public affairs¹ or matters of State.

Here was a frank and open declaration of Erastianism. He must have the Church placed under his feet. The conflict which followed we must briefly trace.

On James's side, the fight began at once. David Black, minister at St Andrews, was put on trial before the Privy Council, owing to some reports of what he had said in the pulpit. Black declined their jurisdiction, denied the charges as false and calumnious, and claimed to be tried in the first instance by the Church.² The Council

¹ Calderwood's Hist. v. 451.

² In that trial before the Privy Council, Petrie tells us "David was wonderfully assisted with courage and wisdom, and the brethren also who were appointed to assist him, especially Robert Bruce" (Petrie's Hist. Part iii. 522; M'Crie's Melville, ii. 70-81).

went on, and found the charges of such a kind that the King admitted "he did not think much of that matter." They condemned him, however, for declining their jurisdiction, and sentenced him to banishment. He was charged "to enter his person in waird in a part by-north the North Water upon his own expenses."¹

We know what James's views were from a book which came to light three years later. "A principal part of a King's duty," he holds, lay in ruling the Church. Among other things, it belongs to the King to judge when preachers wander from their text, and those who refuse to submit to his judgment in such cases should be capitally punished.² The preacher was to stand in the pulpit on peril of his life, if he took a different view of his text from what pleased the King. If these were his views, it is no wonder that the ministers took a firm stand. When Black's case came on, the Church through all her Presbyteries was moved, and joined together to present a solemn protest, signed by upwards of 300 ministers.³ James, however,

¹ Calderwood's Hist. v. 498.

² Basilikon Doron (M'Crie's Melville, ii. 161-62).

³ "Diligence was used in gathering subscriptions, so that in a short space the hands of about 400 were at it. None so diligent

had the power of the sword. Black had to go into banishment, and the King was to fix what further punishment should be inflicted on him. Then it was that Bruce, one of the noblest men in the ranks of the ministry, standing side by side with his brethren, and speaking in their name with simple dignity, told James and his advisers that if it had concerned the life only of Mr Black, or of a dozen more of them, the matter would have been comparatively trifling; but it was the liberty of the Gospel and the sovereignty of Christ which was assailed, and they must oppose all such proceedings at the hazard of their lives.¹ For a moment the King was arrested in his course. Black had indeed to yield to the sentence, but Bruce's words, and the resolute front presented by the ministers banded together, convinced James that such violence would not do.

Changing his course, therefore, he set himself from that time to get the Church by her own act to place herself in his power. It is a study

as John Spottiswood, afterwards Archbishop of Santander. Howbeit, he even then revealed unto the King all their counsels and proceedings, either by himself, or sometimes by a courtier with whom he was familiar. He was the only suspected Judas among the ministers at that time" (Petrie's Hist. Part iii. 521).

¹ Calderwood's Hist. v. 482.

full of painful interest to mark the steps by which, unscrupulously and skilfully, he goes to work, never pushing matters so as to provoke an outbreak,¹ but stealthily and steadily moving on towards the end he desired. First he would get Bishops appointed who would be subservient to his will—through them he would get a subservient Church—then, by her own consent, he would break down her spiritual independence, and then all would follow as he wished. He would be as absolute a monarch in Scotland as Francis or Henry were in France.

He began his operations in the Assembly which met at Perth in 1597. A large contingent of men favourable to his views were brought down from the North. The Royal Commissioners stirred their jealousy against their South country brethren, and prevailed on the Assembly to lend the King so far a favourable ear. Soon after, the Assembly again met at Dundee, when he got a committee appointed which proved a tool² in his hands—"a wedge," as Calderwood says, "taken

¹ In some instances this was due to the Privy Council holding him back (M'Crie's *Melville*, ii. 207 ; see also Calderwood's *Hist.* vii. 607-610).

² "The King's led horse," people called it (Calderwood's *Hist.* v. 644).

out of the Church to rend her with her own forces." The following year (1598) it was proposed to have some ministers in Parliament to represent the brethren. They need not be Bishops, he said—call them only Commissioners—no prelacy was to be thought of like that in the Church of Rome or Church of England.

This was too plausible, however, some men said. An old minister, for example, in the Synod of Fife thought it was too like bringing in the Bishop after all, "Busk him, busk him as bonnilie as ye can, we see him weel eneuch. We can see the horns of his mitre."¹

Two years afterwards, when the Assembly met at Montrose, 28th March 1600, a further step was taken.² Bishops were to be appointed; restrictions were imposed indeed; they were to be called Commissioners, not Bishops, and there were other conditions which James promised to observe. These safeguards were stringent enough, but no sooner was the Assembly over than he broke his word, and three Bishops³ were at once appointed unconditionally.

¹ Melville's "Diary," 437.

² "Force and falsehood prevailed" (Calderwood's Hist. vi. 20).

³ M'Crie's "Melville," ii. 144-151. The Assembly of 1602 is the

It is strange to observe how skilfully he could avail himself of passing events to further his design. An instance of this was seen in regard to the Gowrie Conspiracy, a singular occurrence which took place in 1600. Because the ministers, like most other men, at first refused to believe the rather incredible story which James told, he made it an excuse for banishing some of the ablest and best of them, including Bruce.

In 1603 he ascended the English throne, and a new scene opened. Before leaving for London, he went on Sabbath to the Church of St Giles, and addressed the people with many fair promises. In his first address, however, to the English Parliament he avowed his deep hatred to Puritans and Presbyterians, and certainly in Scotland it was soon seen what his promises were worth. At once a struggle began over the question as to the right of the King to call or dismiss the General Assembly, and James fought the battle as if he were determined to subjugate the Church; while the Church stood fast, under the conviction that her whole Spiritual Independance was at stake.

A meeting of Assembly had been formally

last acknowledged by the Church as a free and lawful Assembly till that of 1638.

appointed to be held at Aberdeen in July 1604, but a royal mandate was issued proroguing it till the following year. The representatives from St Andrews, however, went north at the appointed time, and took a protest against what the King had done. This kindled a flame, and led to keen debates all over the Church.

In 1605 the King took a still stronger step. He prorogued the Assembly, and named no day for the next meeting, as if determined to assume the power of suppressing the Court altogether.

On the other side, the Church boldly faced the position, and resolved to meet at the appointed time. A body of ministers accordingly appeared.¹ They found the King's Commissioner there, with a royal letter commanding them to disperse, but in order to receive the letter it was necessary for them first to constitute the meeting. This was done, and when the letter had been received and read, a messenger-at-arms entered, and in the King's name ordered them to retire, on pain of rebellion. They agreed to comply, asked the Commissioner to name a day for the next meet-

¹ Only nineteen were present. The state of the weather made attendance difficult. It was besides a perilous step they were taking.

ing, and on his refusal they appointed the Assembly to meet on the last Tuesday of September.¹ Yielding so far to the King, they had yet vindicated the right of the Church to hold the meetings of her own Assembly.

The King was furious. He was King of England, and resolved to trample down all resistance. Of the nineteen ministers who met at Aberdeen, fourteen of the most influential were cast into prison, and brought to trial at Linlithgow for high treason.

In conducting the trial, the most shameful course was taken by the Government officials. The Lord-Advocate, writing to the King afterwards, says that if he had not packed the jury the ministers would have been acquitted. When the jury retired, they were interfered with by the Justice Clerk. They had been warned that if they did not convict they would be tried themselves, and their lives and fortunes be at the mercy of the King. A verdict was thus extorted, condemning the accused by a majority of three. The result was that eight of the ministers were banished to the remote Highlands, where several of them soon

¹ M'Crie's *Melville*, ii. 201.

sank into the grave; six of the more eminent were banished to France.

At this point the Independence of the Church was felt to be the question which overshadowed all else.¹ In stating what that question involved, it would be difficult to find the matter put more clearly than by Welsh, one of the sufferers. He was in prison at Blackness, awaiting his sentence on a charge of treason, when he wrote his well-known letter to the Countess of Wigton. He and his fellow-sufferers, he tells, were witnesses to this truth, that "Jesus Christ is the King of saints, and that His Church is a most free Kingdom, not only to convene, hold, and keep her meetings and assemblies, but also to judge of all her affairs, in all her meetings and conventions, amongst her members and subjects. These two points—(1) that Christ is Head of His Church, and (2) that she is free in her government from all other jurisdictions except Christ's—these two points, I say, are the special cause of our im-

¹ There was indeed another great constitutional principle for which they contended. By statute it was enacted that the General Assembly was to meet once a year. The question, then, was whether the King could by royal proclamation set the law aside. Could the King, in the exercise of his own arbitrary will, set

prisonment, being now convicted as traitors for the maintaining thereof. We have ever since been waiting with joyfulness to give the last testimony of our blood in confirmation thereof.”¹

Never were the principles of the Free Church more strongly held, or more strikingly expressed, than by Welsh when he wrote thus down in the dungeons of Blackness. The sacred powers with which Christ has invested His Church must be fearlessly upheld. Face to face with the King and all the terrors of persecution, they must be loyal to Christ and His cause on earth. Welsh and five of his friends, as we have seen, were banished to France. The next step was to summon to London eight of the leaders.² The most formidable of all, Andrew Melville, was thrown into the Tower, and was afterwards allowed to retire to France, where he died.

Thus by imprisonment and banishment James was cutting down the most influential men in the

himself above the law? This was the battle which was afterwards fought out with the Stewart kings in England to the bitter end. The Scottish Churchmen were already standing in the breach, and bearing the first brunt of the conflict (McCrie's Melville, ii. 203).

¹ Select Biographies, Wodrow Society, i. 23.

² Calderwood's Hist. vi. 480.

Church, and he could push forward his schemes more freely. In 1610 a bolder step was taken. The Assembly which met at Glasgow consisted very much of his nominees; and he got two things settled—first, that he was to have the full power of calling and dissolving Assemblies; and, second, that the Bishops were to have complete control in their several dioceses. There was some difficulty in gaining over the Assembly, but at last actual bribery was brought to bear.¹ The gold coin called *angels* were found to be powerful auxiliaries; the Commissioner was said to have a plentiful supply, and knew how to use them.² In the popular speech of the day this was known as the “Angelical Assembly,” those golden angels having had so much to do in guiding its decisions. Parliament, of course, subsequently ratified its Acts, making them even more stringently prelatie.

The great event of that period, however, was

¹ It was alleged that the money was given for travelling expenses, but Calderwood shows this was a pretext; it was for votes (Calderwood's Hist. vii. 97, 98).

² The supply came to an end, however. “Johnne Lawder, minister at Cockburnspeth, comming late when there was nothing resting to be dealt but ten pund fourtie penneis lesse, was content to take that small sowme” (*Ibid.*).

the Perth Assembly of 1618. Careful preparation had been made. The most subservient men were brought up, and Spottiswood acted as Moderator. The attack on the Presbyterian Church did not now concern merely questions of government; it had to do with the most sacred services of religion. Kneeling at the Lord's Supper, Episcopal confirmation, the keeping of holidays, and other observances are to be introduced—in short, the well-known five articles of Perth. A letter was read from the King unduly to influence the Assembly, and other extraordinary means were used.¹ The question, for example, on some of the points, was put to the vote in this form, “Consent to the articles or disobey the King?” Even then Lord Ochiltree and forty-six members voted against the articles. Formally, however, they were adopted and passed.

It was not till three years afterwards that Parliament ratified what had been done, and then, even in that subservient body, the minority was formidable. The day on which the royal assent was given was much observed. Men told how the heavens grew dark with portentous

¹ Calderwood's Hist. vii. 308-332.

gloom ; and when the royal sceptre touched the Acts, there came loud successive peals of thunder, followed by a deluge of such rain, with hail, as had hardly ever been seen in Scotland. The day was long remembered as the Black Saturday.¹

Another of James's doings was the setting up of the Court of High Commission (Feb. 1610), a body of men chosen by him, and invested with arbitrary powers entitling them to set the law at defiance ; and with their aid the King and the prelates were soon hard at work breaking down the Presbyterian Church. The leading ministers were banished from their parishes ; the Principal of the University of Edinburgh and one of the professors at Glasgow were dismissed. Among the laity high-handed measures were taken. Some Edinburgh citizens had complained of the doctrine preached by William Forbes, one of James's favourite ministers, afterwards a Bishop. They were tried, condemned, and fined or imprisoned, and in some cases banished.² Criticising a Court preacher was dangerous work.

These things ran their course during the last seven years of James's reign. The Easter of 1625

¹ Calderwood's Hist. vii. 505.

² *Ibid.* vii. 596-610.

was to have been celebrated with special pomp, according to the Perth Articles. All was ready, in obedience to the King's directions, but he died on the 27th of March, and there were few to mourn his departure.

The character of James does not stand high with any party. George Buchanan had given him the best education to be had in those times, but the result was disappointing. All through life he had favourites on whom he leaned, creatures who flattered him. In his conversation there was a strange mixture of cleverness and silliness. He loved to talk, and went on freely saying smart and often shrewd things, but mixed with such pedantry and frivolous folly that men could not look upon him with respect. And yet he was a man of fixed ideas, wrong-headed, and morally a low, mean-minded man; still he could lay his plans, and choose his agents, and bide his time. Lord Moncrieff, in a recent lecture, has ably sketched his character, and given prominence to this feature of it. James in a sense was only too successful. He broke through the Church's Spiritual Independence. He imposed—so far as law could do it—the Episcopal system on his country. He was no weak man who

could do this in the face of opposition such as he had to encounter. The change, indeed, was all on the surface; the Church and the country were unchanged. It was soon to be seen that Presbyterian Scotland stood where Scotland had always stood since the days of Knox.¹ It shows James's power, however, that he could outwardly succeed even so far as he did.

When he died, the whole Kingdom was fermenting with the elements of discord and resentment. The old nobles keenly felt the haughty airs which the upstart Bishops took on themselves. The people were still more bitter. Episcopacy was the badge of subjection to English power. The very name of Bishop was distasteful, and the men whom the King appointed were in many cases little fitted to win respect for themselves or for their office.

In these circumstances, Charles came to the throne, with all his father's despotic principles, but without his father's skill in guiding affairs.

¹ Even before James's death there were many evidences of this. In 1624 the conforming ministers of Edinburgh complained to the Privy Council that "they could have no peace with the people so long as other ministers, specially the deprived and silenced, resorted to the Town and kept private Conventicles (Calderwood's Hist. vii. 611).

He began with a proclamation, 1st August 1625, enforcing the Perth Articles, and when the Synod of Lothian afterwards petitioned to be released from their observance, he not only indigantly refused, but ordered the petitioners to be punished—the result being that there was no observance of the Lord's Supper that year in Edinburgh.

Similar mistakes were soon afterwards committed by him. It was a blunder in policy when, in November 1625, it seemed as if he were about to endow the Bishops by taking back from the nobles the lands granted to them. It was a blunder when he wanted to regulate the dress of the clergy in 1633. It was a blunder when he roused public indignation by the prosecution of Lord Balmerino, whom he got condemned in 1634, and yet had to pardon under the pressure of public opinion.

But still more disastrous for Charles was his ill-fated attempt to introduce the Book of Canons and the Liturgy. It was done against the advice of Spottiswood, by the influence of the younger prelates, the followers of Archbishop Laud.¹

¹ Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, "was the ruler of Scotland in so far as to control those large policies in which the vital

In May 1635 the Book of Canons was imposed, under the great seal. It subverted the Presbyterian system, overthrowing purity of worship. As for the Liturgy, they resolved to have a special book prepared for Scotland. It was submitted to Laud, who made numerous changes, bringing it nearer the Romish service.¹ Then, in December 1636, an order was issued by the Privy Council enjoining its observance, and empowering the Bishops to require all the clergy to provide themselves with two copies, on pain of being declared rebels.

Meantime a feeling of indignation had been rising. The nation was more intensely Presbyterian than ever, and the condition of affairs had got to be almost intolerable. On the 23rd of July 1637 the crisis came, when in the church of St Giles the Liturgy was attempted to be read, and either "Jenny Geddes or some one else flung the stool. The congregation broke up in confusion—the event sounded through the land like a call to arms. Scotland rose, and the

interests and aspirations of the people centred" (Hill Burton, vii. 141).

¹ Kirkton, p. 30.

reception of the Liturgy from that day was hopeless.

Then it was that the right man came forth from his retirement to guide the national movement. Alexander Henderson was minister of Leuchars, a small parish in the county of Fife. He had been ordered by Archbishop Spottiswood to buy the Liturgy and use it in Divine worship. He was willing enough to buy it, but as to using it he took a decisive step. He came to Edinburgh, and, acting along with three of his brethren, he petitioned the Privy Council to arrest the orders of the Archbishop. They agreed, and issued their arrest. All that was required was the purchase, not the use, of the Liturgy. Henderson had thus checked the career of the prelates, and taken the first step in that course of action in which he proved himself a born leader of men.

Charles's own conduct made the matter worse. He sent a threatening letter from London, which exasperated the nation. They gathered from all quarters to Edinburgh. Various proceedings took place, till at last it was evident that some decisive step must be taken if the liberties of the country, both religious and civil, were

not to be overborne.¹ A solemn fast was observed, consultations were held, and a momentous resolution was adopted 26th February 1638. There must be a National Covenant. It was drawn up by Henderson and Johnston of Warriston on the old lines of that of 1581, and after being revised by the Earls of Rothes, Loudon, and Balmerino, a day was appointed for having it signed.

At Edinburgh, accordingly, in the Greyfriars Churchyard, on the memorable 28th of February 1638, this was done with great solemnity, in the midst of a vast assembly of people. The Earl of Sutherland led the way, and men of all ranks followed, some signing with their blood, and some adding the words "till death."

This national covenant was more simple than the Solemn League and Covenant adopted five years afterwards. It bound men to resist Popery, it vindicated the Presbyterians from the charge of rebellion, and contained a solemn engagement to continue in profession and obedience to the true reformed religion, renewing at the same time their vows of allegiance to the King and in

¹ Baillie's Letters, i. 25, 26.

defence of the liberties and laws of the kingdom. All over the land, especially in the south and west, the signing of this Covenant was carried on till the end of April.

The spectacle paralysed the Privy Council. It appalled Spottiswood, who exclaimed, "Our work of thirty years is overthrown at a single stroke." He left the country, went to London, and soon afterwards died.¹

At first the prelates counselled war, but when news came from Inverness and the Highlands that the Covenant was finding support in the North, Charles was staggered. His English advisers were in favour of peace, for his relations with his own subjects at home were getting dangerous. Feeling that he must temporise, he sent the Marquis of Hamilton as Commissioner to hear the grievances of the Covenanters. His private instructions were to speak them fair, gain their confidence, find out their secrets, and overreach them. That was Charles's idea of statesmanship. It is pitiful to see such an attempt to deal with men of the calibre of Henderson and his friends, whose sagacity has never been surpassed. Behind

¹ Stevenson's History, p. 212.

it all, however, Charles's object was to gain time.¹ The Marquis accordingly came down, and on approaching Edinburgh, as he rode along from Musselburgh to Holyrood, he met with a royal reception. There was a long array of nobles, gentry, and people, drawn out to do him honour, and as he passed through the lines he is said to have been deeply moved to see so many of the best of his countrymen, grave, devout, earnest men, waiting to receive the message which he brought.

The Conferences began, but the Covenanters cut the matter short. There were two things they must insist on as essential—a free meeting of the General Assembly, and a meeting of Parliament empowered to give redress. Unless both demands were agreed to, there was no need to confer further. Various negotiations took place. Hamilton tried to shake them, but they were firm. Hints even began to be thrown out that they might hold an Assembly without asking the King's leave.

When it came to this, it was time for the Com-

¹ "I give you leave to flatter them with what hopes you please, your chief end being now to win time, until I be ready to suppress them," etc. (Instructions quoted by Hetherington, p. 292).

missioner to go back to London, and let Charles know the state of affairs. Warlike preparations he found were in full progress in the South. He was sent back, with instructions to divide the Covenanters. He came, but the attempt failed. Then he agreed to the calling of an Assembly on certain conditions, but that also failed. The Covenanters would not be trifled with.

At last matters came to a point. It was formally proposed to hold an Assembly whether Charles would or not. The Marquis asked a delay of twenty days, and again set off for London. In the meantime the Presbyterians, in his absence, went on with their preparations as if the holding of the Assembly had been a foregone conclusion.

The time wore on, and after some further procedure, the King gave in. The Marquis came back to say that the General Assembly would be held on the 20th of November, in Glasgow, and Parliament would meet at Edinburgh on the 15th of May 1639. The Five Articles of Perth, the Liturgy, and the Book of Canons were revoked, the Court of High Commission was abolished, and a free pardon granted for all offences during the late contentions. It must be admitted that,

when Charles yielded, he did so with little reserve.¹

But with all this, there was mischief in the air. He was busy with preparations for war; and the Covenanters, on their side, recalled General Leslie from the Continent, to be ready to act in self-defence.

Meantime, on the day appointed, the Assembly met at Glasgow, and, by general consent, Alexander Henderson was chosen Moderator, as the leader best fitted to deal with such a crisis.² Hardly less important was the choice of a clerk so able as Johnston of Warriston. The King was again represented by the Marquis of Hamilton. There was much prayer before the Assembly met, and afterwards during the proceedings.

Of these proceedings, no account can here be given, except in so far as they affected the question of Spiritual Independence. At the outset, the Royal Commissioner offered obstruction on various points, but the crisis came when the

¹ "The Bishops are to be handed over for trial to the Assembly. The King and his Court are virtually to become Covenanters" (Hill Burton, vi. 507).

² He was "incomparably the ablest man of us all for all things" (Baillie's Letters, i. 122).

Bishops were put on trial. They declined the Assembly's jurisdiction, and the Commissioner interposed, protesting against the Assembly as incompetent. He demanded that they should dissolve. Henderson and the Earls of Rothes and Loudon replied to his objections—they would much regret if the Commissioner should leave them, but the Church must do her duty. The Marquis answered that he stood on the King's prerogative, and he called on the Moderator to close the Assembly. Henderson refused.

It was a case of direct conflict between the two jurisdictions. Hamilton, representing the King, and Henderson, representing the Church, stood face to face. The nobles, the barons, the gentry, as well as the clergy, were there; the whole country was looking on. The gauntlet had been thrown down. Is the civil power to put down the Assembly and close its doors, or is the Assembly to hold the field, and let the civil power do its worst? The fatal thing for Charles was that the Assembly were conscious not only that they were within their rights, and were acting on Divine authority, but that they had the support of Scotland behind them. The resolute will of the nation was there. Fear-

lessly Henderson accepted the challenge. The Royal Commissioner did his part. In the King's name, he declared the Assembly dissolved, and retired. The Earl of Rothes stepped forward, and protested against his departure. Henderson rose to the occasion, addressing the Assembly in a speech full of encouragement. Others spoke, and then, by a vote all but unanimous, the Assembly resolved to continue till the Church's business was finished. The King had withdrawn his sanction, and professed to have dissolved the Assembly. The Assembly vindicated her own inherent right of jurisdiction, and went on with the work in hand.

In the proceedings that followed there was no haste, but there was no delay. All Acts in favour of Prelacy and the royal supremacy were annulled, the Liturgy, the Book of Canons, the Five Articles of Perth, were swept away; and by an Act unanimously passed, Episcopacy was "abjured," as they express it, "in this Kirk, and cast out of it," and Presbyterianism again formally set up. No matter for the Acts of Parliament passed under James. The Assembly, acting for the nation, made a clean sweep of the whole.

The trial of the individual Bishops went on,¹ with the result that they were all deprived of their offices, and eight of them, against whom serious charges had been found proved, were deposed and excommunicated. Henderson, it is said, pronounced the sentence "in a very dreadful and grave manner."²

Other proceedings took place, to which we cannot here refer, and at last the Assembly, one of the greatest in Scottish Church history, came to an end. It was closed by Henderson in a speech of singular power, and after formally dissolving the Court, and pronouncing the benediction, he is said to have uttered the memorable words, "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho; let him who rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite."³

Out of this great struggle, then, the Church had once more risen victorious; she had made good her claim to Spiritual Independence. It was not by any formal assertion of it, but by simply acting on it. She made men see it; she made

¹ "Even under the Acts of 1600, the Assembly had the power" (M'Crie's *Melville*, ii. 151).

² Baillie's *Letters*, i. 168.

³ Stevenson's *History*, p. 352.

the King and the Court, and the Bishops, feel it, and she did so only that she might use it in doing what she believed to be her Master's work.

No sooner was this Assembly over than the King resolved to precipitate the war, and put down by violence the men who had sworn the Covenant. It is not for us to follow the course of public events—the swearing of the Solemn League and Covenant, the calling of the Westminster Assembly, and the adoption by the Scottish Church of the Westminster Standards. In these the Second Reformation was completed, and in the Confession of Faith especially the Church's Spiritual Independence was affirmed, in terms so clear as to leave no ground for further question. “Christ as Head of the Church has therein appointed a government in the hands of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.” There are indeed statements in the Confession which assign to the civil magistrate an important position in regard to religion, but there is nothing that really conflicts with the above. In his own sphere, and by his own methods, he is to give his aid, but it is the Church under Christ which holds the entire

jurisdiction in things spiritual. This is by Christ's appointment.

The details of the history we must not further trace, nor is it needful to go into the question at issue between the Resolutioners and Protesters, that most sad of all controversies that ever rent asunder any Church of Christ. It is enough, in closing, if we cast a rapid glance at the result of these fifty years through which the Church has passed.

We have seen how James was determined to have Episcopacy established, with a subservient bench of Bishops, and under them a subservient Church, and with the aid of the Church he would overthrow the liberties of the country. We have seen how he wrought on, till he made the Assembly the instrument of its own subjection. He used flattery, he used violence, he used deceit, he used bribery, imprisonment, banishment—no weapon came amiss. And then Charles, his successor, imposed his Book of Canons and Liturgy, till Scottish endurance could stand it no longer—the country rose. Scottish principle asserted itself, and all outside show of Episcopacy, together with the whole fabric of supremacy and despotic authority, was swept away.

The Presbyterian Church, free in her Spiritual Independence to serve Christ, her only Head—the nation banded together as one man to contend for civil liberty as dearer than life—that was the outcome of the long conflict. For the time, the Church stood fast. But there was something higher and better than all this. The upholding of that principle of Spiritual Independence had gone hand in hand with times of spiritual blessing, and side by side with this contending for Christ's Headship there had been a great revival of vital religion in the land.¹

One thing was obvious to all observers—the men whose ministry was most blessed were the men who were foremost in contending against the King for the spiritual jurisdiction of the Church under Christ, her Head. To some of the more distinguished of these, did time allow, we

¹ Thus in regard to the signing of the Covenant, it is said: "All Presbyterians whose writings of that time we have seen bear witness that a great measure of the Divine presence did remarkably accompany that solemn action, and that its happy influence was everywhere felt and seen. . . . The Lord from heaven did testify His acceptance of that Covenant, by the wonderful workings of His Spirit in the hearts both of pastors and people, to their great comfort and strengthening in every duty, above any measure that ever hath been heard of in this land" (Stevenson's History, 210).

would gladly have referred more at length. There was Bruce of Edinburgh, for example, greatly distinguished among his brethren, banished from place to place, but carrying a blessing wherever he went. There was Davidson of Prestonpans, who led the Assembly of 1696, when amid prayers and tears they renewed the Covenant; and Welsh of Ayr, and Dickson of Irvine, under whose awakening ministry the religious life of Ayrshire was revived; and Samuel Rutherford, and Livingston of Ancrum, and many another whose praise was, and still is, in all the Churches—on these we must not dwell.

Of still deeper interest is the question as to the effect of all this on the religious condition of the Scottish people. There is a well-known passage in Kirkton's History,¹ which gives a wonderful picture of spiritual prosperity during the interval between the Second Reformation and the restoration of Charles. "Over a great part of the country," he says, "you could hardly lodge in a family where there was not family worship. You could ride far without hearing the sound of an oath. I verily believe there were more souls converted to Christ in that short period of time

¹ P. 65.

than in any season since the Reformation, though of treble its duration. Nobody complained of our Church Government more than the taverners, whose ordinary lamentation was that their trade was broken, the people were become so sober."

This statement has been assailed by writers of various different ways of thinking. His own editor, Kirkpatrick Sharp, is utterly out of sympathy with Kirkton. Principal Lee, and Principal Cunningham of St Andrews, have recourse to the Kirk-Session records of the time, to show the reverse side of the picture. But no one surely would think of going to the records of Kirk-Sessions, or to the records of the criminal and police courts of any country, as if these could give a fair representation of the condition of society. Those old Kirk-Session records, as Dr Lee shows, are painful to read, but all they prove may simply be the vigilance and faithfulness of the Church in the exercise of discipline.

Kirkton himself says (p. 49) that "no scandal could be concealed in all Scotland, so strict a correspondence was there betwixt ministers and congregations." In the Synod of Fife, we find it was enacted in 1650 that every parish be divided into several quarters, and each elder to

have his own for special inspection. . . . Every elder is to visit his quarter once a month at least, take notice of all that was wrong, and relate it to the Session (Hill Burton, vii. 378). Similar vigilance was exercised in other districts, and if all the immoralities of the country were thus put on record, it is little wonder if the minute books of the Kirk-Sessions had many a dark page.

It should also be observed that during these years every care was taken to secure faithfulness and efficiency on the part of the ministers. Commissions of Assembly were sent out over the country, with power to depose any whom they found unfit. In September 1650, for example, one of these Commissions went through Angus and Mearns to make trial of the ministers, hearing them preach, and examining the work they were doing. On that occasion, Lamont reports, "in all 18 ministers were deposed."¹

Kirkton, in a good deal of what he says, professes to speak only of "a great part" of the country. His opinion is the result of his own observation, and of what he learned from those

¹ Chambers' Dom. Ann. i. 181.

round him. Dr M'Crie quotes the testimony of a minister who lived through the period, and whose account goes to confirm that of Kirkton.¹ But what I wish to point out is the remarkable way in which his statements are corroborated by some of the most weighty authorities of that time.

One of these is Wodrow, of whom it is enough to say that he stands conspicuous among our historical writers for the pains he took to secure accuracy, and the honesty with which he recorded the results of his enquiries. He pays the highest possible tribute to this statement of Kirkton's, for he simply lays his hands on it and embodies it almost verbatim in his History.²

For another testimony, I may be allowed to refer to a pamphlet published by my father, Dr Brown of Langton, in 1833, on the eve of the Ten Years' Conflict.³ He had access to the

¹ Old Mr Hutcheson of Kinellan said to Wodrow after the Revolution, "There was far more of the Spirit and grace of God went along with the sermons in those days than now, and for my part (all the glory be to God) I seldom set my foot in a pulpit in those times but I had notice of some blessed effects of the Word" (Gillies' Hist. Collections, i. 315, quoted by Dr M'Crie, Sketches, ii. 60).

² Wodrow's Hist. i. 332.

³ Letter to Dr Chalmers on the settlement of Ministers, etc., p. 13, Edin. 1833.

library at Marchmont House, Berwickshire, where he found a large collection of books on Church history, made by the well-known first Earl of Marchmont, a leading Covenanter. Among the rest was a manuscript copy of Kirkton's History, with a note in the Earl's own handwriting to the following effect:—
“This narrative is the production of Mr James Kirkton, minister of the gospel at Edinburgh, a person of great probity, an assiduous searcher of the things which, before his time, had come to pass in the Church of Scotland, and a close observer of what had passed in his time. The Earl of Marchmont, who had been a witness and partaker of what passed in his own time, gives his testimony to the truth of what is herein narrated. MARCHMONT.” This is the estimate of the Earl, formerly Sir Patrick Hume, whose sufferings and adventures, along with those of his daughter Grizzell, occupy so prominent a place in the romantic incidents of Covenanting history. He was well known as one of the most trusted counsellors of King William, both before and after the Revolution. He was raised to the Chancellorship, the office of highest dignity in Scotland; but he knew all ranks of the

people, and after living to a great age, he left behind him in Berwickshire not only the reputation of a most popular and esteemed country gentleman, but of a sincere Christian. The testimony of such a man, therefore, which he volunteers in favour of the truthfulness of Kirkton's statement, deserves the utmost consideration.

It may still be that the picture of Scotland's religious condition is drawn by Kirkton in colours too bright. He was an earnest and devout minister, and may have been anxious to look on things in the most favourable light. This may have led him too far; but with such emphatic testimonies as those of Wodrow and the Earl of Marchmont, it is impossible to doubt that in its main features, at least, his account is substantially true. And if so—if that was the Scotland of former days, one can only regret that things are so different now. Where is the district of our country in which family worship is all but universal among the households? Where is the locality in which our modern taverners are complaining that their trade is broken, the people are all becoming so sober? The whole history of those times goes to show

that the religious zeal which contended so stoutly for the Headship of Christ, and the Spiritual Independence of His Church, was closely identified with the real life and power of religion in the land. And who can wonder that so it should have been? When men were striving to uphold the honour of their Divine Master, and were oppressed, imprisoned, banished for His sake, it was no wonder that He should own their ministry, and crown their labours with those spiritual blessings which were more to them than all the world besides. To this the whole history of the Church of Scotland bears witness. That great Free Church principle of Spiritual Independence has ever brought its own blessing along with it. God came to refresh His heritage when it was weary.

LECTURE IV.

1660-1690.

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It may well seem that between the Restoration of 1660 and the Revolution of 1688 there is little need to speak of the Church's Spiritual Independence; the whole liberties of the country, civil and ecclesiastical, were overthrown. And yet, even at that time, there were certain important aspects of the question brought out, which are well deserving of notice. I make no attempt to sketch the history of the Covenanters during these years, or to estimate generally their position and character. My simple object is to deal with the question of Spiritual Independence, and with so much of the history as may cast light on that subject.

When the King came back and mounted the throne, the Scottish people failed to take any security for their liberties, either in Church or State. The Presbyterians had put themselves into the hands of Sharp, afterwards Archbishop, whom they had sent to London to negotiate with General Monek. He lived

on their pay, and there is too good reason to believe that he intentionally deceived and betrayed them. At home, in Scotland, men were carried away by the extravagant loyalty of the time. They had formerly stood by Charles, and, at sore cost to themselves, befriended him when he had no other friends, and now they might well have expected to receive favourable treatment at his hands. But what really paralysed them was the miserable division in their own ranks between the two parties of Resolutioners and Protesters. The Presbyterianism of Scotland was in a state of collapse, and the result was that Charles mounted the throne without condition or limit of any kind to his authority.

The first meeting of the Scottish Parliament was held in January 1661, when the Earl of Middleton, a rough, unprincipled soldier, came as Royal Commissioner, and the Government at once set themselves to undo what the Second Reformation had done. An oath of allegiance was framed, giving the King supremacy not only in all causes civil, but apparently ecclesiastical also. The Solemn League and Covenant was set aside, and by an Act rescissory, they annulled all the Parliaments held since 1633—an extravagant Act, as Bishop Burnet calls it, “fit only to

be concluded after a drunken bout. It shook all possible security for the future, and laid down a most pernicious precedent.”¹

Charles soon asserted his power under these Acts of Parliament. On the 14th of August 1661, he wrote that he was resolved, by his own “royal authority,” to restore Episcopacy.² Acting on this, Sharp and three others got themselves ordained as Bishops in London, one of them being Leighton, who soon found how little fitted he was for that company, or they for him. The following Parliament, in May 1662, not only formally restored Episcopacy, but abolished all Church jurisdiction other than that which acknowledged subordination to the King as supreme.³ It was the complete overturn of the Spiritual Independence for which the Church had so long and earnestly contended. What Charles’s grandfather James had done by gradually getting the Church’s own consent, Charles sought to do at a single stroke by the sheer force of an Act of Parliament, setting up Erastianism and Episcopacy on the ruins of the Church’s Spiritual Independence.

But there are things which an Act of Parlia-

¹ Burnet’s Own Life and Time, i. 200-203.

² Wodrow’s Hist. i. 230.

³ *Ibid.* i. 258.

ment cannot do, and this attempt by force of law to make a Presbyterian and spiritually independent Church Episcopalian and Erastian, led to that long, fierce struggle which has made the next twenty-six years one of the darkest and yet one of the most heroic periods of Scottish history. The Church's true position was not to be surrendered at the bidding of King or Parliament.

Bishops were set up, however, and then the difficulty came that the Presbyterian ministers would not acknowledge their authority or have anything to do with them. The Privy Council sought to correct this, and passed an Act ordering all ministers ordained since 1649 to give in their submission to the Bishops before the 1st of November,¹ on pain of losing their stipends, and if they continued preaching, the soldiers were to pull them out of the pulpit. Bishop Burnet tells, on good authority, that when that Act was passed the members of Council were all so drunk as hardly to know what they were doing. Government had been assured that not ten ministers in the Diocese of Glasgow, and few in all

¹ As in the case of St Bartholomew's Day in England, the date was chosen so as to make them lose the stipends of the whole year (Lee's Lectures ii. 321-2, 225 : Burnet's Own Time, i. 317).

Scotland, would refuse ;¹ but the result was that, on the last Sabbath of October, from two to three hundred ministers preached their farewell sermons, the number being afterwards increased to nearly four hundred. It was a fatal step for the Government ; the outgoing ministers were so much respected,² and the incoming men, the curates, so much the reverse. Of these curates, Bishop Burnet, "who lived among them and knew them well," says they were the "worst preachers I ever heard ; ignorant to a reproach, many of them openly vicious—a disgrace to their orders."³

In the meantime these four hundred outgoing ministers, though a minority, were the true Presbyterian Church of Scotland. They upheld her principles before the country, and at great cost maintained her Spiritual Independence. Charles might speak of his royal supremacy in things spiritual, he might put it in an Act of Parliament, but the Scottish people and that faithful band of four hundred would have none of it. They stood out for their Presbyterian principles and Spiritual Independence.

¹ Wodrow, i. 282.

² "Many of them were related to the first families in the country . . . and their piety and kindness to the people secured them universal esteem" (Lee's Lectures, ii. 322).

³ Burnet's Own Time, i. 269.

The next point on which the struggle turned was the refusal of the people to attend the parish churches and hear the curates. On this all the power of Government was brought to bear. The King in his royal supremacy must have power to rule the Church, and compel people to worship where he ordered them. This was the point on which that long struggle rose, that lasted all Charles's time and on into the next reign, marked by many a dark scene of cruelty and blood.

At the outset the parish churches were deserted, the people going off *en masse* to hear those ministers who had stood faithful. Then came an Act imposing a heavy fine, but it had little effect, and was followed in 1664 by a second Act, empowering the soldiers to plunder the people who attended the conventicles. Strange scenes are described when they waylaid congregations at the hour of dismissal, stripping them and going off laden with booty. But soon a more formidable step was taken. The Court of High Commission was set up.¹ It was a mere instrument of tyranny, bound by no rules of evidence, empowered to imprison at pleasure and impose ruinous fines—a court from whose bar, it was

¹ "That institution abhorred and dreaded both in England and Scotland" (Hill Burton, vii. 436).

said, no innocent person was ever known to retire uncondemned—a fitting instrument to enforce Charles's royal supremacy, and crush all human rights, ecclesiastical or civil.¹

For some years this went on, but when it was found that on no terms would the people go back to the curates, the Government resolved to try the effect of downright persecution. In 1666 Sir James Turner was let loose with his dragoons to lay waste the south and west of Scotland. For seven months the cruelties were so severe that it seemed as if on set purpose they were meant to drive men into rebellion. At last it came; the people rose in a wholly unexpected way. Some soldiers in the parish of Dalry had seized a defenceless old man; the report got abroad that they had stripped off his clothes and were proceeding to apply red-hot iron, when his

¹ Instances are given by Principal Lee (Lectures ii. 330-31), as, for example, the following :—"Some parishioners of Ancrum . . . remonstrated against the admission of a curate of infamous character who at the same time enjoyed two other livings. They were brought before the High Commission, and confessed their dissatisfaction. . . . The Commission immediately sentenced them . . . to be scourged through the town, stigmatised [branded with a red-hot iron], and thereafter imprisoned, and with the first ship conveyed to the Barbadoes. For the same opposition to the entry of the curate two brothers were soon afterwards transported to the Barbadoes, and their sister barbarously scourged through the town of Jedburgh."

neighbours, unable to stand the sight of such cruelty, rose and rescued him,¹ one of the soldiers being wounded and another afterwards killed in the struggle. Knowing well the vengeance that would follow, the people kept together—a rising took place, but the country was wholly unprepared, and it led to the disastrous defeat of Rullion Green in the end of November.

Of the severities that followed we need not speak. The Government and, above all others, Archbishop Sharp seem to have taken advantage of the event as warranting the most cruel measures. There were fines, often ruinous, for those who had taken any part in the rising—fines even for giving food and shelter to the fugitives—and there were tortures² and executions, till at last the Government felt that things were going too far. Sharp was ordered to go home to mind his own diocese, leaving public affairs alone.

It was in these circumstances that the first Indulgence was offered in 1669, bringing on again the question of the Church's Spiritual In-

¹ Wodrow, ii. 17, 18.

² These trials "were the first to become infamous by the free use of the torture" (Hill Burton, vii. 454). It was observed that from that date the influence of Prelacy declined and the interests of Presbyterianism gained ground in Scotland (Wodrow, Hist. ii. 120).

dependence. It arose in this way. Certain ministers were selected¹ as being the most peaceable and pliable, and an offer was made that they might return to their parishes on certain conditions, one of which was submission to the Bishops, and another that they should never, in preaching, say a word against the ecclesiastical arrangements recently introduced.² On this understanding they would get back to church and manse; and if in addition they applied and got collation from the Bishop, they would also get the stipend. Some accepted so far as to get church and manse.³ Hardly any went so far as to get the stipend, but the great majority utterly refused the offer. The grounds of that refusal must be specially noticed.

The real point at issue was once more the question of Spiritual Independence. The terms of the Indulgence itself are explicit. The ministers are directed by the King to exercise their ecclesiastical functions "in our name and by our

¹ Besides those selected men who "had lived peaceably," the offer of an income was made to all who would give assurance that they would live peaceably in the future (*Ibid.* ii. 130-31).

² This was called uttering "any seditious discourses or expressions in the pulpit or elsewhere" (*Ibid.* ii. 130). The meaning was well understood—they must not preach against the King's supremacy in the Church.

³ About forty-two in all Scotland (Wodrow, Hist. 134). They lost caste among the people.

authority.”² Still more was this seen when Parliament was asked to ratify the Indulgence. His Majesty, the Act says, “has authority and supremacy over all persons and in all causes ecclesiastical in this realm.” It is an inherent right of the crown “to settle, enact, and emit constitutions, Acts, and orders . . . concerning all ecclesiastical meetings and matters to be proposed and determined therein.”³ This was what Charles had set his heart on—the complete control of the Church in all her doings.

On the other hand, the ministers were no less resolute. The temptation to accept the offer was great, to escape from finings and barbarities such as followed the defeat of Rullion Green—still more to get back to church and manse—and above all to the work and to the people whom they loved. But not even for these things could they own Charles as head of the Church.

Let us understand their position. Here was the King bent on being absolute and arbitrary ruler in Church and State. In civil affairs he has practically succeeded. Parliament and the Council of State do his bidding—to hear is to obey—the spirit of constitutional liberty is

¹ Wodrow, *Hist.* p. 130.

² Burnet's *Own Time*, i. 493.

crushed out of them. The Church is the only power that can resist, and what impelled her was the sacredness of these interests which were at stake. When Charles wanted to make himself head of the Church, and, as they believed, to take the place due only to Christ, they could not yield. For the fear of God they dared not. When asked to accept the Indulgence under an Act which put all the sacred authority of the Church under the feet of Charles, the great majority felt that they really had no choice. The Government might do its worst. All except a small minority refused.

Failing in this, the Government for the next three years set themselves to put down by force the Conventicles, or field meetings, those great gatherings in which the people assembled to worship God in the open air. Severe laws were enacted, heavy fines were imposed—the Bass Rock was purchased as a prison, and every effort was made to suppress the meetings. But the more they were assailed the more they grew.¹ Men came in greater numbers, and they began to come armed. The fines were getting heavier,

¹ The discourse up and down Scotland [in 1674] was the quality and success of last Sabbath's Conventicle (Chambers' Dom. Ann. ii. 368).

for Lauderdale, now a Duke, was the real head of the Government. He had married; his Duchess was "a woman of most unscrupulous rapacity," and more money was required to support his dignity.

At this point there appeared the Second Indulgence of 1672, wider in its scope and more favourable, as some thought, in its conditions. One of its stipulations, however, was strange enough. The ministers were to be coupled together, two and two keeping within the bounds of one parish, in this way confining their influence within narrower bounds. This, like the former Indulgence, met with small success, Blair, minister of Galston, expressing bluntly what many of his brethren felt. When the paper was put into his hands,¹ in the presence of the Privy Council, "My Lord Chancellor," he said, "I cannot be so uncivil as to refuse a paper offered by your Lordship, but I can receive no instructions from you for regulating the exercise of my ministry, for if I should receive instructions from you I should be your ambassador" [not Christ's].² This was his testimony of allegiance to the Church's only Head. It was boldly spoken, but

¹ 8th July 1673 (Wolrow's Hist. ii. 216).

² Among the more strict Covenanters the ministers who accepted went by the name of the "King's curates."

it cost him his life. The Chancellor "took it heinously ill;" Blair was cast into prison, and amid the sufferings of his confinement he soon died. The Indulgence professed to be an Act of clemency, but after all there were cases in which the refusal or acceptance was practically a matter of life or death.

The next point where this question of Spiritual Independence meets us is on the eve of the battle of Bothwell Bridge. But before speaking of that, it may be well briefly to recall the movements which led up to the crisis. The Government were more determined than ever to suppress field meetings. One way of it was that Lauderdale let loose on the country the Highland Host. Seven or eight thousand men came forth from the Popish Highlands with orders to pillage the western counties. For three months they had a rare time, knowing well that the more completely they laid waste the district,¹ the better pleased the Government would be.² At last even

¹ Lauderdale declared "it were better that the West should bear nothing but windlestraws and sandy laverocks than rebels to the King," as he called the Covenanters (Sir W. Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, ii. 30).

² They were instructed to spare the friends of the Government. "It is said, however, that this was a distinction too nice for their

Lauderdale got ashamed. They were ordered home, and Kirkton the historian tells how sorely they were encumbered on their march by the household furniture, the pots and pans, the beds and bedding, and other booty which they carried off to the Highlands. A force of militia was next raised, and a tax imposed to support them. Garrisons were planted and soldiers quartered on suspected districts. Fines got heavier; a sum of thirty thousand pounds sterling for example (£368,000 Scots), was exacted from eleven men in the county of Renfrew, an enormous amount, considering the value of money.¹ A sum of four hundred pounds was set on the heads of Welsh and Semple, two of the outed ministers and leading field preachers. Everything, in short, was done to put down these field meetings. Still the meetings went on, the hearers came armed and in larger numbers, and the meeting places among the wild hills began to be chosen, not merely for the purposes of divine worship, but with an eye also to their fitness as a field of battle. It looked as if

comprehension." They were "impartial in their marauding," dealing equally with friend and foe wherever plunder was to be had (Hill Burton, vii. 472).

¹ See details in Wodrow, ii, 226.

another outbreak could not be far off, but what decided the matter was that Claverhouse came on the scene.

When Archbishop Sharp was put to death on Magus Moor in 1679, the act was felt by very many of the Covenanters to be both a crime and a blunder. The Government naturally were roused, and their proceedings became so cruel that a party of extreme men banded themselves together, and issued what was called the Rutherglen Declaration. On the anniversary of Charles's restoration, eighty of them fully armed rode into Rutherglen, with Robert Hamilton of Preston at their head, cast into the bonfires the persecuting Acts of Parliament, and affixed a proclamation to the market-cross, declaring that they would no longer submit to this tyranny, denouncing at the same time the ministers who had taken the Indulgence. This was open rebellion, the Government held, and the signal was given for Claverhouse to do his worst.

A great field meeting was being held at Loudon Hill, in Ayrshire, when the dragoons appeared. The people stood their ground at Drumlog, a position close at hand. Claverhouse gave the order to fire, the Covenanters charged; the royal troops were broken, and fled, leaving

about forty of their number killed or wounded. Claverhouse himself made a narrow escape.

Once more this temporary success led to a rising, for which the country was not prepared. The defeated royal forces retired to Stirling, while the Covenanters, to the number of about 4000, gathered at Hamilton Muir, with Robert Hamilton as their leader. Several weeks elapsed, but instead of drilling and getting ready for self-defence, they fell into disputes as to the allegiance due to the King, and as to Spiritual Independence, and what should be done about the Indulgence. These ill-timed debates were brought on by the proposal to issue a manifesto, and they fell out as to the terms of it. Never was anything more piteous. The great majority were loyal to the King, but Hamilton and some extreme men stood out. Keen debates arose, the whole army was disorganised, officer against officer, soldier against soldier, denouncing each other, while the King's army was on the march. It was all very deplorable. The result, when the battle came, was what might have been expected. A small body of Covenanters made a gallant stand till overpowered by numbers, but the army as a whole was helpless, and yielded without striking a blow.

Then it was that the real horrors of the persecution began. Our business, however, is not with these cruel details further than to illustrate the great principle which carried our fathers through the ordeal, and to show how deep their convictions were.

Of the army which surrendered at Hamilton Muir, some twelve hundred were driven on foot to Edinburgh, marched through the streets, and penned in the Greyfriars churchyard. For five months they were exposed to the weather night and day, with hardly any shelter. Many perished from exposure. Some were executed—five of them on Magus Moor. Two hundred were sent off to be sold as slaves, most of whom perished by shipwreck; but worse than all, Claverhouse was let loose, and went through the western counties, earning for himself a name of infamy as the cruellest persecutor of that cruel time.

The Covenanters, however, were fearless. A band of their extreme men rode into Sanquhar, 22nd June 1680,¹ and affixed a proclamation on the cross denouncing Charles, and casting off allegiance to him. It only added fuel to the

¹ Wodrow's Hist. iii. 212.

flame. The country was overrun, and scenes of cruelty followed in quick succession. At Airmoss, for example, Cameron fell after that memorable prayer, "Lord, spare the green, and take the ripe." His head and hands were cut off; they carried them to his father in prison, and asked if he knew them. The old man took them up and kissed them, while the tears fell fast. "I know them, I know them," he said; "my son's, my dear son's. It is the Lord. Good is the will of the Lord. He cannot wrong me or mine."¹ The head and hands were afterwards fixed up over one of the city gates of Edinburgh, where for many a day they were seen wasting in sun and shower, keeping alive the memory of the fearless martyr. It is difficult to conceive of the fierce rage of the Government at the time. Hackston of Rathillet had been arrested when Cameron fell, and was publicly executed, but the atrocious barbarities of the execution are too terrible for description. It seemed as if the Government were thirsting for vengeance in its most outrageous form.

If it was expected that this would strike terror into the Covenanters, there never was a greater

¹ Scots Worthies, 429.

mistake. A celebrated meeting was held soon after at Torwood, near Stirling. Cargill, the beloved friend of Cameron, preached and solemnly pronounced sentence of excommunication against the King and six members of his Government mentioned by name. It was a strange, irregular proceeding, not to be defended; but the ominous thing was, that the country generally responded to it. Even the excommunicated men themselves seem to have felt it; one of them—the Duke of Rothes—not long afterwards owning on his deathbed that he felt the sentence binding. Stronger steps followed, and were fearlessly replied to by the Covenanters. Cargill was arrested; the price of five thousand merks had been set on his head. He was executed at Edinburgh, and his head and hands fixed like Cameron's over one of the city gates.

In 1681 the infamous Test Act¹ was passed, one of its noblest victims being the Earl of Argyle.²

¹ It was Erastian in principle, and taken along with the Act of Succession passed at the same time, it made the next king, a Papist, supreme over "all persons and in all causes, as well ecclesiastical as civil" (Hill Burton, vii. 534).

² He made his escape from prison for the time through the address of his step-daughter, Lady Sophia Lindsay, disguised as her page. He was afterwards executed on this charge in 1685.

The reply to these proceedings was another of those blows which the Government felt so keenly. In the early days of January 1682, forty of the Covenanters, armed for self-defence, rode openly into Lanark, and, having publicly burned the Test Act, they read aloud a solemn declaration, affixed it on the cross, and left it there. It reiterated the proclamation of Rutherglen and Sanquhar, and asserted the right of the people to throw off the yoke of a Government so tyrannical. The Government were exasperated, but what they felt still more was the arrival of Renwick from Holland. The field meetings at once revived. Cameron and Cargill were gone ; their bones were bleaching over the gates of Edinburgh ; the Government seemed to have triumphed, when, all at once, Renwick appeared ready to take their place. The battle had to be fought over again, and now it was in dead earnest.

It was the killing time, as men called it, which began in 1684, when the Government were determined to "cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war." Commissions were given to the military to try any whom they suspected, and put them to death, with or without the aid of a magistrate. There was no court in the land to which men could

appeal. The soldiers were judges and executioners all in one. The Covenanters were hunted from place to place, blood-hounds being employed, it is said, to track them, till the wildest retreats, amid mosses and caves, were unsafe.

In these circumstances, the Covenanters stood at bay. Renwick and his friends issued the Apologetical Declaration,¹ announcing that persecution had got beyond what men could bear. Self-defence had become a duty—and, in order to protect themselves, they must retaliate. Especially must the Intelligencers, as they were called, be dealt with—the spies who made it their business to earn blood-money by deceiving and betraying the people. If after this warning they went on with their work, it was at their peril.

It must be confessed that retaliation by private parties, taking the law into their own hands, is a step which in all ordinary circumstances it is impossible to justify. The only defence is, that the fountains of justice were polluted, and the sufferers were subject to cruel oppression enough to drive wise men mad. The threat, however, was enough. It was well known that the

¹ Wodrow, iv. 148.

Covenanters were men who would keep their word. Not a single instance of retaliation was ever needed. The informers and spies from that day let them alone.

But the Government were worse than ever. What were known as the Bloody Acts were passed. A whole series of ensnaring questions were prepared, to be put by soldiers who scoured the country, at their own good-will to inflict torture and death. The "machinery of extermination," as it has been called, was complete, and with relentless rigour they were applying it, when suddenly word came that Charles had died, and James VII. mounted the throne, taking his brother's place of supremacy in Church and State.

At first the whole aspect of affairs grew darker. Claverhouse was promoted to be member of Privy Council, and aided by Grier-son of Lagg, went to work in the country districts. For the mere act of having heard sermons at a field meeting, the penalty was death. The cruelties that followed we need not describe. Who does not know the scene when Brown of Priesthill was shot down at his own door, in presence of his wife and children?

or that time when Andrew Hislop knelt with his Bible in his hand, and refused to draw down his blue bonnet to cover his face, gazing fearlessly at his murderers as he received the fatal volley? Who can forget Margaret MacLachlan and Margaret Wilson, fixed to stakes below the tide-mark, and slowly drowned by the rising waters on the Wigtown shore? It was cruel work, as ease followed ease, far more numerous than we can tell.

There was one band of 160 persons, who must not be forgotten. Marched with their hands tied behind their backs from Edinburgh, they passed through Fife, Forfar, and the Mearns, on to the gloomy Whig's vault in the Castle of Dunottar. After leaving Breechin they were halted, during a "cold and stormy" night, guarded by soldiers, on the bridge that crosses the North Esk, and an unrecorded tradition tells how, in the dark hours, they were heard by the country people singing the well-known Psalm, "*By Babel's streams we sat and wept.*" Under the privations and tortures which awaited them in the vaults of Dunottar, their numbers diminished. At last the survivors were sent to America as slaves, the

men with their ears cut off, the women branded in the face, but the American authorities at once set them free, and all that care and kindness could do was done to give them relief.

During these years we have given no details of the tortures that were inflicted—of the boot, for example, with wedges slowly hammered, stroke after stroke, till flesh and bones were crushed—of the matches kept burning between the fingers, inflicting excruciating torture—of the thumbikins,¹ where the screw was slowly turned till strong men fainted under the agony. It is a record from the details of which the mind gladly turns away.

At last, in the second year of James's reign, the fires of persecution began to burn low. The country seemed as if worn out, though there was a gallant band who kept the banner flying. The King was a bigoted Papist, and now, he thought, the time had come to introduce Popery. By royal edict liberty was given to the Roman Catholics, and he soon saw that liberty must also be given to his Presbyterian subjects. Conces-

¹The thumbikins were introduced "on the recommendation of Dalzell, who had seen them in Russia" (Chambers' *Dom. Anu.* ii. 484).

sion after concession was made, till in June 1687 there came an Indulgence of which most of the Presbyterian ministers availed themselves, and some who had fled to Holland returned. The Cameronians stood out, and Renwick, the last of the martyrs, died on the scaffold in February 1688, when Sheils at once stepped into his place, and kept the field. But the hour of deliverance had struck ; the Prince of Orange landed, James fled, and the Great Revolution had come.

Here let us pause, and ask what was the meaning of all this. Why did our fathers face such an ordeal, and what was the motive that carried them through ? In one respect it was a battle fought by them, as Presbyterians and Scotchmen, against Episcopacy in the Church and Despotism in the State. But in another and higher aspect it was a struggle for Christ as the Church's only Head, and for the Church as holding her spiritual freedom and authority direct from Him.

The Presbyterians of that day were naturally the defenders of civil liberty. The Episcopalians, on the other hand, were the defenders of the arbitrary power of the Crown. Indeed, they could hardly help it ; they were dependent on the

King, leaning upon him as against the nation, and therefore subservient to his will, while the Covenanters in opposing prelacy stood out for political and civil liberty. It is well known that the divine right of kings to absolute authority, and the duty of submissive obedience and non-resistance on the part of the subject, were favourite themes among the Divines of the Episcopal Church both in England and Scotland. On the other hand, Knox and the Presbyterian leaders had imbued the Scottish people with the great principles of civil and religious liberty. The Covenanters in all their contendings were invariably found on the side of the rights and liberties of the subject. Even the extreme adherents of Cameron and Cargill were resolute in their attachment to the cause of law and order as against royal tyranny. They held it, indeed, as a sacred principle that the King must be obeyed in the exercise of all lawful authority, but if he set himself tyrannically above the law the nation was entitled to resist. Civil liberty then was one of the great objects for which our fathers embarked in that struggle, and if Scotland be this day a land of liberty and independence, let us never forget how much we owe to those who in

the days of the Kings usurped authority, suffered and bled for the rights and liberties of the people.

But great as this principle of civil liberty was, it may be questioned what would have become of it if it had stood alone. Parliament and the Council of State, who ought to have protected the rights of the nation against the tyranny of the Crown, showed nothing but obsequiousness. So far as they were concerned the country might have been enslaved. Charles had them under his feet.¹ It was the Church which resisted him, and she did so because of still more sacred interests which were involved. The great principle of Spiritual Independence came into action—the sacred truth that the Church has Christ for her only Head, and holds spiritual jurisdiction direct from Him. It was their love and loyalty to Christ therefore which compelled them. Along with this there was the feeling of loyalty to the Covenants which they had sworn, and loyalty to the principles of the First and Second Reformation, but at the root of it all

¹ The King was "the absolute master of Parliament" (Lauderdale Papers quoted by Hill Burton, vii. 466).

there was the love and loyalty which they bore to Christ Himself. Zeal for His honour was the great motive which carried them through the struggle, and made them faithful unto death.

We find this not only among the ministers, but among the people of all ranks—nothing can be clearer than the testimonies which the sufferers gave.

In regard to the ministers, we have seen how far they carried this principle, when so many of them refused the various Indulgences with which they were tempted. It would have been a great thing to get back to their parishes, but those royal Indulgences were all fatally vitiated. They were to be received on the authority of the King, and at his will and pleasure. On this footing the offer could not be listened to. Even though he had made the conditions far wider than they were, yet if men must submit to hold the position as from the King, and at his goodwill—on such a footing they will have none of it. The Spiritual Independence and jurisdiction of the Church was a thing which the King had no right to give *as from himself*, and they had no right to receive thus at his hands. Already they had it from Heaven as given them by Christ. In

this lay the crucial point on which the whole conflict turned. To submit to Charles's claim of royal supremacy would be to deny Christ. They held that the King bringing his authority into things spiritual was thrusting himself into the place which belonged to none but Christ. He was a usurper. To yield to his claim would be to prove themselves unfaithful to their Saviour. The moment that this became plain, the Church had no choice. Men could suffer and die, but they could not surrender. They saw the powers of earth, and, as they believed, all the powers of hell, banded together against them. No matter, Loyalty to Christ was involved in the cause of Spiritual Independence. The question of civil liberty also came in. In that crisis of our history the great Free Church principle proved its vital importance, and ultimately under God it had a decisive influence in securing the freedom both of the Scottish Church and of the Scottish nation.

Thus it stood with the ministers, but the people of all ranks were not less resolute and clear in the testimonies which they gave. Wherever you open the "Scots Worthies," or any other of their publications, evidence of this meets you on

every page. As the old preface¹ to the "Cloud of Witnesses" expresses it : "This is the most radiant pearl in the Church of Scotland's garland, that she hath been honoured valiantly to stand up for the headship and royal prerogative of her King and Husband Jesus Christ." But it will be best to let the sufferers speak for themselves, and to learn from their own lips what was the cause for which they died.

Listen, for example, to James Skene, an Aberdeenshire gentleman of good family : "I lay down my life for owning Jesus Christ's despised interest, and for asserting that He is King and Head of His own Church, and has not deputed any other, Pope, King, or Council, to be His vicegerent on the earth."²

Hear, again, Captain Paton, who had served with distinction under Gustavus Adolphus, and under General Leslie at Marston Moor, and had done all that man could do for the Covenanters at Rullion Green. Standing on the scaffold down in the Grassmarket, he speaks in strong, direct, soldier-like terms, "I leave my testimony as a

¹ Cloud of Witnesses, p. xix.

² *Ibid.* p. 92.

dying man against the horrid usurpation of our Lord's prerogative and Crown right, I mean the Supremacy established by law in this land, which is a manifest usurpation of His crown." ¹

Take along with this the statement of a servant girl, Isabel Alison. They brought her in before the Privy Council, "a poor lass," as she calls herself, to be questioned and cross-questioned by lawyers and judges and Lords. She managed to let them know her mind, however. They sent her to the Grassmarket to die, and standing on the scaffold, she said, "I told them that they had declared war against Christ, and had usurped and taken His prerogative, and so carried the sword against Him and not for Him. So I think none can own them unless they disown Christ Jesus. Therefore, let the enemies and pretended friends say what they please, I could have my life on no easier terms than the denying of Christ's kingly office. So I lay down my life for owning and adhering to Jesus Christ, He being a free King in His own house, for which I bless the Lord that ever He called me to that." ²

¹ Scots Worthies, p. 492.

² Cloud of Witnesses, p. 126.

It is needless to multiply such quotations and instances—these are the sentiments which are found to pervade statements and dying testimonies innumerable. It is the same with all ranks of the people—the man of culture—the landed proprietor—the gallant soldier—the poor servant girl, they know and can tell what it is they die for—Christ and His royal prerogatives, as King and Head of His Church. For that cause they mounted the ladder or laid down their necks under the axe. It was done in loyalty to Christ, the Church's only King and Head.

The Revolution Settlement we shall afterwards consider, but there is one thing which should be noticed here before we close. The ministers who were expelled in 1662 were recognised in 1690 as forming the National Church. These were the men who had stood faithful to her constitution and principles, and they had carried these principles with them outside the Establishment. All along, while scattered and persecuted, they had been the real Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and when the storm had passed away it was round them that the nation rallied as the Church of their country. The entire ecclesiastical authority was left in their hands. It lay with them to say who should be

admitted and who were to be excluded. Along with the laity who adhered to them, these were the men whom the Government and the people recognised as forming the Church of Scotland.

They were sadly reduced in number ; a broken band of sixty survivors were all who remained of the original four hundred. Before the fierceness of persecution they had been driven to the dens and caves of the earth, but now the storm had spent itself, and they came forth few in number and worn with hardship, to re-unite their scattered forces. The Lord had turned their captivity, and when they met and looked each other in the face they were as men who dreamed. On the 16th of October 1690, a meeting of the General Assembly was held—the first after an interval of thirty-seven years. A day was spent in humiliation and prayer, and we can conceive the feelings with which they constituted that assembly in name and by authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Church's only King and Head, for whose sake they had borne the burden and heat of those terrible days. A great work was yet before them, the restoration of the Church and the re-building of her broken walls, but the faith which had

carried them through the days of persecution was with them still. In the name of God they set up their banners, and strength was given to them in the time of need.

LECTURE V.

1690-1800.

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WE are now to speak of the Revolution Settlement and the difficulties which the Church had to encounter during the events that followed. In March 1689 the Convention of Estates had declared the throne of Scotland vacant, but it was not till a year and seven months afterwards — 16th October 1690 — that the General Assembly met. During that interval William and Mary had mounted the throne, and Parliament had been busy. They had annulled all Acts in favour of Prelacy; they had reinstated in their parishes the “outed” ministers of 1662 who still survived; they had ratified the Westminster Confession of Faith, had restored the Act of 1592, and finally they had abolished patronage and the oath of supremacy.

After all this, however, there was a large section of the Covenanters who refused to accept the

Settlement mainly because the Solemn League and Covenant and other Acts connected with the Second Reformation were not restored ; for such a step, however, the nation was not prepared. In modern times Dean Stanley and others have sought to fasten on the Revolution Settlement the charge of Erastianism. The question has been much debated. During the 'Ten Years' Conflict Mr Andrew Gray of Perth, one of the ablest of our writers on the side of the Free Church, discussed this point in full detail, and showed, I think successfully,¹ that the charge of Erastianism is founded on a mistake. In regard to our present subject, the Spiritual Independence of the Church, it is enough to say that the Westminster Confession of Faith was adopted and sanctioned ; and whatever view may be taken of that Confession in other respects, of this there can be no doubt, that in it the Church's Spiritual Jurisdiction is written as with a sun-beam. And, on the other hand, there is no real ground for the allegation which has sometimes been made, that the Confession was enacted by

¹ The Present Conflict between the Civil and Ecclesiastical Courts, etc., by the Rev. A. Gray of Perth 1839, pp. 80-92.

the State and imposed upon the Church as its creed. The Act of Parliament says that the Confession was approved by them "as the avowed Confession of this Church." Ever since 1647 that Confession had been the Church's avowed Confession, and Parliament merely recognised it for what it already was—the Church's Creed, which they were to "ratify and establish," giving it such sanction as was competent. But while the Revolution Settlement as a whole cannot in fairness be charged with Erastianism, it had yet some serious defects.

In abolishing patronage and cancelling the binding and astringing clause attached to it, they left the nomination of ministers in the hands of the Kirk Session and heritors. The heritors had only a civil qualification, and to give them Church power in such a case was wrong in principle.

And there was another defect. In ratifying the Confession they failed to enact along with it one important proviso in the Act of Assembly of 1647, the effect of this omission being that the King might claim the power of calling and proroguing the General Assembly. This soon proved a root of bitterness. With all these

defects, however, the Revolution Settlement was accepted by the great majority of the Church and the people of Scotland, not as a perfect measure, but as one which they might act under, while using all the means in their power to have it made better. If ever there was a time when some allowance must be made, it was amid the turmoil attending the close of that long cruel persecution. It was a great thing that the friends of the Church, surrounded as they were by Jacobite influence and intrigue, were able to secure so much as they did—especially that the Church was recognised as holding her spiritual jurisdiction according to the Confession of Faith, not from the State, but from Christ. Thanking God that so much had been made sure, the Church felt she must now set herself to the work which God had given her to do.

King William was no sooner seated on the throne than he showed the cherished purpose on which his heart was set—the union of the Presbyterian and Prelatic clergy in one Church. As a statesman it was to him a matter of pressing importance to have them brought together. He seems to have had no particular belief in any

form of Church government; at all events, a united Church and a united people were far more to him than any difference between Presbytery and Episcopacy. He soon saw, however, that the national Church must be Presbyterian. Both the ministers and the people believed in the Presbyterian system, and held its principles far too firmly to allow it to be interfered with. William acquiesced; the people willed the Presbyterian form, and so it must be.

Still, his favourite idea was to get the Episcopalians inside the Established Church—he would have a door left open for them, and would make it as wide as he could. Indeed, he would fain have gone so far as to bring in at once with no questions asked all who would conform and sign the Standards of the Church.

When he wrote to ask that this should be done, he never seems to have doubted that the Assembly would agree, and on finding that they stood out it gave him deep offence. As a mark of his displeasure, he issued a proclamation cancelling the meeting of Assembly in November 1691, and proroguing it till July 1692. To that meeting he wrote in still stronger terms to say that the Episcopalian clergy must be admitted,

and he even sent down the formula which they were to sign on being received. The Assembly held firmly, on the other hand, that it was their business, not his, to say who were to be admitted to the ranks of the ministry,¹ but they shrank from a collision, and allowed the matter to hang fire, till at last the royal Commissioner interposed. They had delayed long enough, and he dissolved the Assembly without naming a day for the next meeting, intimating that the King would let them know when it suited him. It seemed as if the old conflict had reappeared, and as if William wanted, like James and Charles, to have the Church under his control. But, once more, the Moderator, supported by the Members of Assembly, was equal to the occasion; he simply appointed the next meeting to be held in August 1693.

¹ They had been taking steps to have this matter settled. Two Commissions had been appointed to visit the different parishes, one to the north, and the other south of the Tay. The incumbents were to be retained on two conditions—*First*, that they were doing their work faithfully as parish ministers; and *secondly*, that they would sign the Confession of Faith and conform to the Presbyterian Church. It should be remembered that all along these Episcopalians had used the Presbyterian forms of worship.

Here was a direct challenge. The King was incensed against the Church for her obstinacy, while the Church was standing on her rights against the Erastian interference of the King. An actual collision was skilfully avoided by the management of Secretary Johnston, son of the famous Johnston of Warriston. Parliament was got to address the King requesting him to call a meeting of Assembly, which he did, naming a day so near that named by the Church herself that there was no need to fight for the difference. The Church had substantially gained her object, the Assembly was to meet.

That meeting did not take place till 1694, owing to the King's absence on the Continent. At last when it was held, it proved to be critical, and but for Carstares might have led to a disastrous explosion. An oath of assurance and allegiance to William as King *de jure* had been imposed as a condition to the holding of any office, lay or clerical. The Episcopalians who were Jacobites of course refused. The Presbyterians had no objection to the oath in itself, but to have it imposed and made a condition of spiritual office in the Church was an Erastian interference not to be endured. It

shows how sensitive they were on such points. The ministers and people alike got excited over it, and that meeting of Assembly in 1694 brought matters to an issue. The King and Council were determined that all members must swear the oath before taking their seats. The ministers and elders were determined to refuse. They petitioned the Council to be relieved, and were denied. The royal Commissioner sent an express to London stating the facts. It was considered on a day when Carstares happened to be absent from court, and he found on his return that orders had been issued to exact the oath. It is one of the most striking scenes in the history of the time when Carstares arrested the King's messenger, got possession of his despatches, and taking them in his hand, made his way into William's bedchamber late at night, woke him, fell on his knees at the bedside, and begged his life. The indignation which followed when the King knew what he had done made him aware of how dangerous a man William was to interfere with. But Carstares laid before him information which no one else possessed, showing that these despatches would set all Scotland in a flame and alienate his best friends. The result was that they

were thrown into the fire. Other despatches in the opposite sense were written out and signed, the royal messenger was hurried off, and reached Edinburgh not a moment too soon, riding into the city on the morning of the day when the Assembly was to meet. There had been great anxiety, and such was the effect of William's timely compliance that very liberal concessions were made to meet his views, these concessions going further than many of the more faithful ministers afterwards approved of. Still, William was dissatisfied, and showed his displeasure by proroguing and again proroguing the Assembly.

The Church, on the other hand, resolved to assert her Spiritual Independence and make her position clear. After consultation they issued in 1698 a "Seasonable Admonition," as they term it, in which the spiritual authority of the Church is set forth in all its length and breadth. "We do believe¹ and own," so the testimony states, "that Jesus Christ is the only Head and King of His Church, and that He has instituted in His Church officers and ordinances, order and government, and not left it to the will of man,

¹ Seasonable Admonition, etc., p. 5. Quoted by Hetherington, p. 576.

magistrate or Church to alter at their pleasure." They make it plain that equally after the Revolution, as before it, the Church held fast by that great principle of her Spiritual Independence under Christ, her only Head. William's attempts to tamper with it did not involve serious practical consequences, but they seemed to call for some emphatic testimony on the part of the Church, and certainly it was given in no doubtful terms.

The same zeal which thus showed itself in defence of her rights showed itself no less in the Church's efforts to spread the Gospel among the people. All along her history these two things go together. At this period the difficulties in the north of Scotland especially were very great. The preachers whom she sent forth had very often to deliver their message amid scenes of turbulence and outrage. In spite of it all, however, the work went on. For the sake of the Master whom she served, she put forth her energies in proclaiming against all opposition the message of peace and goodwill.

At last, in 1702, King William died. He had done much for the religion and the liberties of Scotland, and the Church honoured him for his services as an instrument in the hands of God.

His attempts to interfere with her Spiritual Independence were, after all, on a small scale. She resisted him, but evidently it cost an effort to act in opposition to one to whom she owed so much.

In 1702 Queen Anne ascended the throne, and the General Assembly at their first meeting voted an address full of loyalty ; but taking their stand firmly on the Claim of Right, the foundation on which the Revolution Settlement rested.¹

Soon, however, all other subjects were lost sight of in the negotiations that were going on for Union with England. The whole country was in a ferment, and the subject on which, above all others, the nation was determined was to have the Church made safe. The Commissioners appointed to negotiate with those of England were stringently bound not to allow the doctrine, discipline, or worship of the Church of Scotland to be interfered with. They were to settle other matters as best they could, but the Church must be made secure ; every right and privilege belonging to her must remain intact.

¹ Acts of Assembly, p. 321.

And very faithfully did the Commissioners carry out their instructions. The Act of Security was passed guarding the Church as far as human precautions and binding national engagements could avail. The English Commissioners agreed that in all time to come her Confession of Faith, her Presbyterian government, and her constitutional rights should remain intact. Every possible interference in the direction of Erastianism or Episcopacy was barred. Nothing could be more complete.

We are now to enter on the history of the Church during the eighteenth century under Queen Anne and the Georges. We shall meet with the rise of Moderatism, leading to the formation of the Secession Church under the Erskines and of the Relief under Gillespie. It was not the State, however—it was the Church herself—which did what was then done. The one event which brought the Church into hostile contact with the civil magistrate was the re-enactment of the law of Patronage, but before speaking of this there are some minor references to Spiritual Independence which may be noticed.

So early as March 1703 there occurred one of those slight attempts to encroach on the province

of the Church¹ with which we are so familiar. Towards the close of the Assembly some Synod Records came up for attestation in the usual way. These were found to contain strong statements as to the right of Church courts to meet in virtue of their own inherent powers. While they were under discussion, and the Assembly were about to record their approval, the Royal Commissioner suddenly interposed, and in the Queen's name dissolved the Assembly. The Assembly, however, refused to close until they had appointed the time for holding the next meeting. The following year, accordingly, they were firm. The Synod Records were again brought up and formally approved.

In 1712 an important Act was passed, depriving Church censures of all civil penalties in time to come. Under Popery the sentence of excommunication was equivalent to outlawry, and that was one of the things that the Reformation failed to remove. Parliament had retained it against the wishes of some of the leading ministers, Calderwood the historian, for example. It was now enacted in 1712 that the sentences

¹ Willison's Testimony, p. 31.

of the Church should be effectual only to spiritual results, and in this way the ground was cleared between the two jurisdictions—the temporal and the spiritual. The Episcopalians were to enjoy full toleration, but they must first take the oath of abjuration renouncing the Pretender. Unfortunately, this oath containing one objectionable proviso was imposed also on Presbyterians. To many it was intolerable, and the Church was split into two parties—the Jurants and Non-Jurants. Among the laity especially the oath was detested. At one time a complete schism seemed imminent. It required all the influence of Carstares to prevent an entire disruption, but a change was made in the terms of the oath, and ultimately the storm spent itself and passed away.

Another example of these minor collisions occurred in 1737 in connection with the Porteous Riot. The Government were so incensed at that outbreak that they seem for the moment to have lost self-control. Among other extreme measures the clergy were ordered to read during divine service a proclamation calling on the people to aid in bringing the rioters to justice. This proclamation was ordered to be made on

the first Sabbath of every month for a whole year, on pain of the ministers being expelled from the Church courts. It was too much however. The more faithful of the ministers flatly refused such interference with the services of the pulpit,¹ and no steps were ever taken against the recusants.

Thus there were signs from time to time that the old antagonism between the civil authorities and the Church was smouldering and ready to break out. The State gave orders, the Church refused the State's control. These matters, indeed, were of minor importance. All the time, however, the fatal root of bitterness was Patronage, the cause of continual jarrings, which ran on through the eighteenth century down into the

¹ "It converted ministers of the Gospel into messengers-at-arms" (Cunningham's Hist. ii. 449). There was a still more serious objection. "The most part of the ministers in many Synods and Presbyterys . . . had not freedom to read the said Act, because they judged the penalty to be properly a *Church censure*, seeing by it ministers would be divested of the power of Church government and discipline, which is given them by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and is [as] essential to their office as preaching or dispensing the Sacraments. . . . For ministers to become the magistrates' heralds to proclaim this law on the Lord's Day in such a solemn manner, would be an homologating of their encroachment, and a *consenting to this Erastian power of the Magistrate*" (Willison's Testimony, p. 94).

nineteenth, and culminated in the Disruption of 1843.

Patronage had been abolished, as we saw, at the Revolution, and the patrons were to be compensated by receiving a sum which seems to us small enough, but it may have been approximately the market value of their patronage rights at the time. When the Union with England came, the national faith was pledged to retain this arrangement inviolate.

In 1712, however, all this was forgotten. The Union was but five years old—no more—when some Jacobite intriguers¹ misled the British Parliament, and in the most shameless way Patronage was restored to the former holders. The Bill was hurried through Parliament in hot haste. They succeeded in getting it passed by the House of Commons before the Scottish Church could send a deputation to oppose it; and when the deputation had hurried up to London, those intriguers succeeded in getting the Bill read a second time in the House of Lords, passed through Committee, and read a third time in a single day. This indecent

¹ Lockhart's Papers, vol. i. p. 418.

procedure was an insult to Scotland, and well became an Act destined to bring about such disastrous results.

In regard to Patronage, it is a question whether in its own nature it be not a direct invasion of the Church's Spiritual Independence. In the month of July 1712, immediately after the Act was passed, there was a meeting of the Commission of Assembly, and great resentment arose among the members. Some were opposed to Patronage out and out, holding it to be sinful; others, including two Lords of Session, alleged that there might be a presentation to the tithes or teinds. On this principle the Church all along sought to guard herself. Patronage only referred to the temporalities of the benefice. The patron presented to the living, but the Church held in her own hands the whole power as to the formation of the pastoral tie. None but those she had licensed could receive a presentation, and after it was received none but those whom she approved and whom the people called could be ordained. Thus the Church's position under Patronage was defended, but practically the influence of the patron was great, and was ultimately found

to be indefensible. The great difficulty was to give the people by means of the call a really effective voice in the settlement of their pastors. Of these two antagonistic elements, the presentation of the Patron and the call of the people, it was clear one or other must give way—Patronage would practically suppress the call, or the call would limit Patronage. In fact, both of these results came to pass at two different stages of the history. During the eighteenth century Patronage gradually grew in power till it all but extinguished the call. During the nineteenth popular influence has asserted itself, and Patronage has been weakened by successive steps till finally it has been abolished and become a thing of the past. A glance at this history is necessary if we would understand the Church's position.

Taking the first twenty years after the restoration of Patronage in 1712, we find hardly a single case in which a preacher accepted a presentation *simpliciter*. In 1715, indeed, a Mr Duguid was presented by the Queen to the parish of Burntisland, and accepted the presentation, but his case served as a warning. They brought him before the Church Courts; and when

he stood upon his rights as a presentee, the General Assembly simply stripped him of his license.¹ Preachers found that their only safe course was to accept the presentation with a proviso that there must be a call from the people, and that they left themselves in the hands of the Presbytery. During those twenty years there were many settlements without a presentation, but no single settlement without a call. Whatever the law might say, the essential thing was the call.

In about twenty years, however, Moderatism began to raise its head, and soon set itself to suppress the voice of the people while the evangelical party strove to uphold it. Disputed settlements became the order of the day. When cases came before the Assembly, the decisions were often uncertain, sometimes favouring the patron, and sometimes the people, but gradually the friends of patronage prevailed.

One of the most serious results of this was the first Secession in 1733. The immediate occasion was a sermon preached by Ebenezer Erskine before the Synod of Perth and Stirling,

¹ Patronage Report, pp. 365, 366. Cunningham Hist. ii. 418.

in which he condemned what the Church had been doing in "trampling on the rights of the Christian people by intruding pastors on reclaiming congregations." There were other reasons which came into the case, but this was the immediate and outstanding occasion of the first Secession.¹ The result was that adherents in great numbers began to leave the Established Church, and in many cases they were the best of the people.

Meantime, inside the Establishment there was no little disturbance. Instances began to occur in which the Presbyteries not only took the side of the people, but flatly refused to ordain the obnoxious presentees even though the Assembly ordered it. It went against their consciences to thrust a man on an unwilling people, and they would not do it.

This was met by a special expedient. A Riding Committee, as they called it, was appointed—a body of ministers who had no such scruples ready at the bidding of the Assembly to settle any man anywhere. If there was a recusant congregation or a Presbytery absolutely declining

¹ Dr M'Crie, Patronage Report, p. 370.

to carry out a forced settlement, a moveable column of this kind was called into action to ride over the land and override the scruples both of Presbyteries and people. There was much work for them to do in those days. During the ten years between 1740 and 1750 more than fifty cases of disputed settlements came up before the Assembly.¹ The people fought gallantly, but they fought a losing battle, the friends of Patronage went on steadily gaining ground.

In 1751 the Moderate party took a step in advance. The case of Torphichen, where the people resolutely opposed the presentee, was before the Church Courts. On two successive years the Assembly had ordered the Presbytery to go on with the settlement, and twice the Presbytery had refused. A Riding Committee was sent, and the presentee was ordained amidst great popular indignation. It was the last occasion on which that kind of Riding Committee was appointed. When the case came before the Church Courts, Principal Robertson, then a young man, distinguished himself in the

¹ Morren's Annals, i. 344-367.

debate,¹ and afterwards a paper was issued, drawn, it is believed, chiefly by him, with all his well-known ability, laying down the principles on which for many a day the Moderate party acted under his leadership. Presbyteries were thenceforth to have no choice. It was their duty to carry out the decisions of the Supreme Court; that duty they must themselves discharge, and not leave it to be done by others. They might retire from the Established Church; if they had scruples, it was their only remedy; if they stayed in, they must obey.

The case of Inverkeithing which took place almost immediately afterwards showed in what way these principles were put in force. The people had resisted the settlement, the Assembly had ordered the Presbytery to carry it out—they refused, and the six recusant members—a majority of the Presbytery—were brought before the bar of the Assembly. A resolution was passed that one of the number be deposed as a warning to all Presbyteries in the future. Mr Gillespie of Carnock was fixed on, who thus became famous as the leader of the Relief

¹ Morren's Annals, i. 211, 231.

Secession. The Moderates were carrying things with a high hand, as if resolved to crush the Evangelical minority, and yet the two parties up to that date seem to have been nearly equally balanced. A motion to restore Gillespie the following year was lost in the General Assembly only by three votes.¹

But the Moderate leaders were determined. In cases of disputed settlement the Assembly began invariably to decide against the people and in favour of the presentee, so that congregations ceased to resist; they simply left the Church and built a Secession meeting-house. The Presbyteries also took warning by the fate of Gillespie, and ceased to object. Moderatism was triumphantly doing its work. Presbyteries and congregations were subdued, Patronage was victorious. It came to be the established practice, confirmed by a long series of decisions, that the secular influence of the patron with his civil rights must overbear the rights of the people in the settlement of their ministers.

At last Principal Robertson took yet another and a final step. The call of the people, he

¹ Morren's Annals, i. p. 278.

maintained, was superfluous. In form it was kept up, but was regarded as of no real value. It had never been recognised in any Act of Parliament. They must go by the Act, and consider the call as of no effect. The only thing needed was a valid presentation by the patron. A paper of concurrence by the people, if they were disposed to express their goodwill, might be proper enough, but not the call as if it were of any avail, or as if the people had any right to express an opinion in regard to the minister to be ordained over them. The Church must do nothing more and nothing less than what the State ordered in the Act of Parliament. No matter for the First or Second Book of Discipline; no matter for the Church's immemorial practice, the Act of Parliament must be the Church's rule.¹ Thus the Erastianism inherent in the whole system of Patronage was made to

¹ See Principal Hill's Sketch of Robertson's Ecclesiastical Policy. According to Dr Hill Burton, however (*History of Scotland from the Revolution*, ii. 55), this view of the law on which the Moderate leaders acted is more than questionable. "What seems chiefly to be overlooked is that it [the Patronage Act] left untouched the real popular element, whether of call or veto. Whatever privilege of this kind by the law of the Church the congregation possessed by the Act of 1692, was left uninjured by the Act of 1711."

appear, but it was the Church herself that pushed it to this extreme.

This fact should be carefully noted, because the civil courts of that day were disposed to leave the Church a free hand in dealing with things ecclesiastical. Cases might be referred to as showing how the civil judges guarded the Church's jurisdiction—more alive to her rights and responsibilities than was the Church herself.

It may be enough to take the case of Duns, which became vacant in 1749. The patron had issued his presentation, but the Presbytery, when resolving to moderate in a call, determined to make it a call at large, the effect being that the people were left free to choose either the nominee of the patron, or any other whom they might prefer. On this the patron applied to the Court of Session to have the Presbytery interdicted from that course, and compelled to confine the call only to the presentee. This conclusion, the Law Report says, the Lords "would not meddle with, because that was interfering with the power of ordination, or internal policy of the Church, with which the Lords had nothing to do."¹

¹ Hay v. Presbytery of Duns, February 26, 1749. See Claim of Right.

It was a wise decision. If the Lords of Session in 1838 had been like the judges in 1749, there would have been no Disruption.

The case of Lanark¹ was not less clear. There were two rival patrons and two presentees. The Presbytery selected the one who seemed to them to have the best claim, and ordained him. The Court of Session decided that they had taken the wrong man, and they refused to give the stipend to the minister ordained by the Presbytery. But the remarkable thing is that his position as parish minister was not touched. The Church had given him his standing, the Civil Court did not interfere; he was parish minister without stipend. This was the law of Scotland last century. In things ecclesiastical the jurisdiction of the Church was recognised by the civil judges.

The Moderate party, however, went on their way. Cases came up such as that at Biggar and Fenwick, in which not a single name of any member of the congregation was at the call. No matter, the ordination was ordered to go on. All opposition in the Church Courts was

¹ Patronage Report, p. 419.

crushed, and Moderatism rode roughshod over the people.

Meantime the people did not like it, and not unfrequently these forced settlements led to scenes of violence, and sometimes of riot, when the military had to be called in. Not only ministers in their robes, but bands of armed men, were required to induct the presentee into his parish.

One of the first cases of this kind, Dr Lee states, occurred at Linton, Peeblesshire, in 1731, where "very tumultuous proceedings" took place. It was necessary to have an armed force quartered in the parish to preserve order.¹

It is needless to multiply such instances, which were all too numerous over the land. One may be mentioned, however, which occurred at Alloa in 1750,² where Mr Syme, the presentee, was obnoxious to the congregation. The settlement had been fixed for the 28th of September, but was resisted by the people. The colliers of Alloa and two or three adjacent parishes assembled riotously to prevent it, rang the Church bell from morning to night, and in the afternoon,

¹ Patronage Report, p. 419.

² Morren's Annals, i. 185, 356.

when the Presbytery retired, displayed a flag from the steeple in token of victory. The November meeting of Commission appointed a Riding Committee to carry out the ordination on the 21st of November, which they did successfully, with the aid of four companies of soldiers. This Mr Syme so ordained was afterwards married to the sister of Principal Robertson, who accompanied the Riding Committee on the occasion. Mr Syme's daughter, Miss Syme, the niece of Principal Robertson, married in England, and was mother of Lord Brougham, who was thus grandnephew of the great leader of the Moderates. One might almost suppose that the principle of heredity is to be traced in the well-known speech of Lord Brougham in 1839, when the Auchterarder case was decided in the House of Lords, and when he spoke with scorn of the idea that any weight was due to the views or feelings of the people.

The colliers of Alloa ringing the church bell, driving off the Presbytery, and waving the flag of victory from the steeple, showed well enough what the popular sentiment was on such occasions, but sometimes the people became still more demonstrative.

In 1762 a Mr Wells had been presented to the parish of Shotts.¹ The whole of the congregation, with a single exception, were keenly opposed to him, but the Assembly ordered the settlement to go on, and every member of Presbytery must be present. When the Court met at the appointed time, the people mustered, and would not allow them to enter either the church or churchyard. A second attempt was made, but the people got hold of the presentee, carried him off, and made him sign an agreement never to trouble them more. Then followed another meeting, when the military, a body of horse and foot, with the Sheriff at their head, appeared on the scene. Even this failed. The people, knowing well the roads by which the different members of Presbytery would travel, waylaid them, and carried them off in various directions, treating them with all possible respect and kindness. The result was that when the hour arrived, the military were there at the church, horse and foot, the presentee was there, the Sheriff was there, but there was no Presbytery. At last a day came when the people

¹ Patronage Report (Parliamentary) Appendix, p. 154. Scots Mag. xxvi-xxx.

were defeated. The Presbytery had had enough of going to Shotts, so they met quietly down at Hamilton, and ordained Mr Wells, "at the Presbytery table," the result being that the congregation went off and joined the Relief Secession.

But remarkable as all this was, far more impressive were some of the cases where the people, wearied out and oppressed, offered no resistance. A single example will show how this was carried out.

At Nigg, near Inverness, the whole parish was opposed to the presentee, but the usual forms were gone through, and the Presbytery were to meet for his ordination. On entering the church, they were surprised to find the building empty, no one having appeared. While deliberating in some perplexity as to what should be done, a solitary man entered, and taking his place in the front gallery as representing the parishioners, he warned them solemnly against what they were about to do, and protested that the blood of the parish of Nigg would be required at their hands if they settled that man, ordaining him to the bare walls of the empty church. The startling effect of this solitary voice in the silent building arrested them. They referred the case

to the Assembly with the usual result, and they were subjected to a rebuke for having hesitated. They must go home and carry out the ordination.

The settlement at Muckhart in 1734 may be given as showing what were in some cases the after effects of such procedure. A Mr Rennie had been presented by the patron, but the call was signed by only two resident parishioners, while the whole people were opposed to him. The Presbytery having refused to ordain him, the Assembly appointed a Riding Committee to carry out the settlement. When the day came, however, the parishioners waylaid the presentee, carried him off to Dollar, and kept him till the time was past. Another day was appointed, and the presentee appeared under a guard of soldiers. The people meantime had so effectually barricaded the doors of the church that one of the windows had to be broken open, and the ministers having in this fashion got entrance, went through with the ordination. The parish church was deserted. Mr Rennie never preached in it except once—on the Sabbath succeeding his ordination. He continued parish minister for fifty-two years, but he never had a Kirk-Session, not even a single elder, never dispensed the

Communion, never made a collection for the poor. He let the manse, reserving only the dining-room in which he preached. In the minutes of the Presbytery of Auchterarder it is stated that sometimes he had not more than three or four hearers.¹ He took on lease the farm of Boghall to the west of the parish, and proved so successful as a farmer that he bought the property of Ballilisk, and when he gave up the farm it brought to the landlord "triple the rent it had yielded when he took it."² It was a case in which Patronage and Moderatism had very completely done their work.

In 1780-81 Principal Robertson retired from the leadership of the Moderate party. Dr Hill of St Andrews took the helm, and for three or four years an effort was made to have the call restored. But Hill nailed his colours to the mast; he was all for patronage, and so carried the Assembly with him that the Evangelical party gave up the fight, one result being that the Assembly no longer instructed the Commission to use every effort to get patronage abolished. That had

¹ Cunningham Hist. ii. 435.

² See the details in "Historic Scenes in Perthshire," by Rev. W. Marshall, D.D., p. 280.

been done annually during the greater part of the century, but was now given up, as good reason there was. For many years it had been a sham.

But what had all this to do with Spiritual Independence? We formerly saw that lay patronage as it came to be enforced was practically an invasion of the Church's independence. There were some nine hundred patronages in the hands of the Crown and private patrons. These patronages were bought and sold. The holders were men of good character or of bad, as the case might be—members of the Church of Scotland, or of some other Church, or of no Church, or men hostile to all churches. Why were such men to have a right to interfere and select the preacher for a Christian congregation, and why in such matters were the civil judges to interfere and enforce their rights? The Church, like any other institution which is really independent, must have the inalienable right to appoint its own office-bearers. Besides, the very nature of the ministerial office stamps it as a spiritual office if anything on earth is spiritual. It is in the name and authority of Christ that any man is invested with it. The outward act

which makes the appointment to the sacred office must be in the hands of the Church herself, and she must be free from secular control if she is a spiritually independent Church. How shall the lay patron who may be a man of no religion be allowed to take a part so important in these proceedings? How is the civil court to be allowed authority to enforce his rights, setting aside the call of the people? Was it not plain that patronage when thus enforced involved the surrender of the Church's independence? It was an unwarrantable interference with the rights and liberties of Christ's spiritual kingdom.

The only way in which the Evangelical party in the Church could bring themselves to submit to it was by giving force to the call of the congregation, making it all-important and decisive of the question whether the man should be ordained or not. It was on the call of the Christian people that the Church proceeded in the act of ordination, not on the presentation of the patron. All this seemed self-evident. It was so keenly felt in 1712 when patronage was re-imposed that the Church rose almost as one man to resent the Act and resist it. It was

detested as a yoke forced on them by the Erastian interference of the State.

But we have seen that the conduct of the Church herself under the sway of Moderatism made the yoke of patronage worse than it needed to have been. In extinguishing the call of the people and making the presentation of the patron all in all,¹ the Church with her own hands drew the chain of secular influence more closely round herself. The Evangelical party saved their position by protesting that all this was a violation of the Church's constitution. On that constitution they took their stand.

But now let us look at the practical results of what was done. When the Church's independence was invaded and the principle of the Free Church thrust into the background, what was the effect on the religious and spiritual life of the country?

Explain the matter how we may, the growth of Moderatism and the high-handed enforcement of patronage had a deadening effect on the Church.

¹ Dr Cook, who in after days led the Moderate Party during the Ten Years' Conflict, gave it as his opinion that "a Call is incompatible with patronage, and therefore nugatory," "an empty form" (Cook's Life of Hill, pp. 144-156).

It went ill with the clergy when promotion depended on their gaining the favour of that class to which the patrons belonged, among many of whom loose irreligious opinions prevailed. From that day lax religious belief began to be common among the ministers themselves, and marked religious declension set in. Dr John Erskine, in writing to Bishop Warburton, had spoken of the paganized Christian divines who were found in the Church of Scotland under the name of latitudinarians, "but Socinus lies at the root." Among not a few indeed it was Deism which prevailed. Their sermons were mainly essays on moral duties,¹ leaving out of view the essential doctrines of the Christian faith. They aimed at literary polish and refinement, but they had little influence among the people. The remarkable fact was that while the Moderates were preaching morality without Christ, the morals of the people were sinking lower and lower. Theatre-going and other forms of worldliness prevailed, and Dr Erskine speaks of the great and growing depravity of

¹ Even in 1734 the Synod of Perth and Stirling, addressing the General Assembly, complained of "the mere moral harangues" which were substituted for the doctrines of the Gospel (Cunningham's Hist. ii. 446).

manners in Edinburgh. There is evidence of this only too convincing. A contemporary pamphlet, for example, of high authority, by Creech, the well-known bookseller and publisher, sketches the state of the city of Edinburgh in 1783, as compared with what it had been in 1763, twenty years before.¹ It was at this time that the city began to break out beyond its old limits. Two millions of money during these years were laid out mainly on building the new town along Princes Street and the other neighbouring streets. The boys of the High School had increased from two hundred in 1763 to five hundred in 1783. The writer says that the quality of the sermons was wonderfully improved, referring evidently to their literary polish, Dr Blair eclipsing all others. Along with this he tells how the attendance at Church had greatly diminished. Formerly in 1763 Sunday had been observed by all ranks as a day of devotion. In 1783 the church attendance had greatly fallen off, family worship that had been "frequent"

¹ Letters respecting the mode of living in Edinburgh, etc., by Theophrastus. Printed in 1788, afterwards published with the author's name in the Statistical Account of Scotland (see Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces, by W. Creech, Esq., 1815).

was now "almost totally disused."¹ As to manners and conversation in company, he contrasts the modesty, decency, and reserve of 1763 with the looseness, forwardness, and freedom of 1783. In regard to morals, the change for the worse was sufficiently painful. One item it may be enough to mention. Sins against the seventh commandment were punished by a fine which went to the poor, and during these twenty years such had been the increase of immorality that the annual amount of fines had risen from £154 to £600. This was the time when Principal Robertson had done his work, and the system of Moderatism which he had built up was in full force. The coincidence is remarkable. These clergymen had possession of the pulpits. In polished periods they were preaching moral duties denouncing all such religious revivals as those at

¹ This is not the place to enter into details, but the following may be added as showing the change that was going on:—

"In 1763 the clergy visited, catechised, and instructed the families in their respective parishes."

"In 1783 visiting and catechising are disused except by one or two of the clergy" (Edition 1788, p. 15).

"In no respect was the sobriety and decorum of the lower ranks in 1763 more remarkable than by contrasting them with the riot and licentiousness of 1783, particularly on Sundays and holidays" (Fugitive Pieces, p. 107).

Cambuslang and Kilsyth, and stigmatising our godly forefathers as high-flyers and fanatics. Their own system was triumphant, and we see the result; the increase of irreligion and immorality in the city was obvious to common observation.

It should be remembered that ever since 1733 the Secession Church and the other Dissenting Churches had been rendering invaluable service to the religion of Scotland. In many parts of the country where Moderatism and religious indifference prevailed, it was through their labours that vital godliness was maintained, and to their zealous efforts Scotland owes a deep debt of gratitude which should never be forgotten.

In the meantime the Moderate system reached its full development under Principal Hill. To show what its influence really was, we may refer to two decisions passed by the General Assembly at the close of the century.

In 1796 the subject of Missions to the Heathen was considered in a lengthened debate, and all such efforts to spread the Gospel were formally condemned. It was on this occasion that Dr John Erskine, the venerable leader of the Evangelical party, interposed with such striking effect.

An elaborate speech had just been delivered in condemnation of Missionary effort, when the old man rose under deep feeling, and before beginning his reply, stretched out his hand, calling aloud, "Rax me that Bible," as he pointed to the copy lying before the Moderator. The scene was long remembered when he lifted the sacred volume, and with all his intellectual power and fervour confronted his opponents with the testimony of God's Word. But in that Assembly all such appeals were vain; the objectors triumphed, and the Church took her place as an adversary to all Missionary efforts for the spread of the Gospel in heathen lands.

Three years later there was a similar display at the Assembly of 1799. Simeon of Cambridge, Rowland Hill of London, and other men of kindred spirit had been preaching Evangelical truth with great power in various parts of Scotland, and had been allowed in some instances to enter the pulpits of the Established Church. This was brought under the notice of the Assembly, and an Act passed in which they "discharge and prohibit all the ministers of this Church" from employing "such persons" to preach, and "from holding ministerial communion

with them." The Church of Scotland thus under the guidance of the Moderate leaders had cut herself off from ministerial intercourse with the Evangelical members of all the Churches of Christendom. The pulpits of the Establishment were barred against the good men of every other denomination. The Established Church had isolated herself.

Already in these Lectures we have seen how the principle of Spiritual Independence has been found to go hand-in-hand with religious earnestness. We have now seen how that principle was overborne by the system of Patronage, and we have seen the practical results. The Secession Church had been expelled, three hundred chapels had been built, many tens of thousands of the best of the people had left the Establishment, while in large portions of the country under the Moderate clergy religion itself was in a state of decay.

Then it was that men were startled by the French Revolution. The reign of terror set in, and amidst the crash of social institutions on the Continent the whole British people were roused. It was felt that the revival of earnest vital religion was the one hope of the Church and of

the nation. That poor pale religion of Moderatism was helpless against the alarming powers of evil that were abroad. The minds of men were stirred. Society for a time was shaken to its foundations. Public opinion imperatively demanded a change. The friends of Evangelical religion were rapidly gaining ground. The warmth and zeal of the Church in her better days began to return ; many were looking out for the dawn of a brighter time, and prayers were going up that God would visit with His favour the vine which His right hand had planted. The Evangelical revival was at hand.

LECTURE VI.

1800-1843.

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DURING the first thirty years of the present century there is little in the history of the Church which bears on the question of Spiritual Independence. A great religious change was taking place in society. The Evangelical party, under the leadership of Sir Henry Moncreiff (father of the first Lord Moncreiff), was year by year gaining ground in the Church Courts. In the pulpit, men of intellect and genius—Chalmers, Thomson, Gordon, Welsh, and others—were preaching evangelical truth with a power and fervour that made itself felt in all ranks of society. The historical works of Dr M'Crie made a deep impression in the same direction. *The Christian Instructor* appeared, giving scope to Dr Thomson's rare controversial powers. Bible and Missionary Societies were rising up all over Scotland. It was a day of bright promise for

those who had long been contending on the side of evangelical truth.

At last, in the General Assembly of 1834, the Evangelical party found themselves in a majority, and had to take the responsibility of guiding the Church. Previously as a minority their course had been easy; they had only to argue against the Moderate party, and when outvoted they could protest and appeal to the Constitution which they believed to have been violated. But now they had the responsibility of deciding what should be done. The future of the Church was in their hands.

During the years that followed there was a time of great enterprise and energy in all Christian work. The cause of Missions received a wonderful impulse. Without going into details, it may be enough to say that during the first five years after the Evangelical party rose into the ascendant, the funds contributed annually for such objects increased more than tenfold.¹ At the same time, efforts were made to purify and strengthen ecclesiastical discipline, and through the Church Extension scheme to supply

¹ Memoir of Dr Chalmers, by Dr Hanna, iv. 88-91.

religious ordinances to the neglected portions of the community. It was a time when religious effort in many different directions began to be vigorously prosecuted.

In the midst of this stir and movement, however, the Church was suddenly called to engage in a conflict in which her very existence as an Establishment was threatened, and this soon brought to the front the whole question of Spiritual Independence. The history of the Voluntary controversy has never been written, and no account of it can be given here except to show the influence which it had in preparing for the Disruption.

What first raised the question was a sermon preached by Dr Marshall of Kirkintilloch before the Associate Secession Synod in April 1829. It was an elaborate attack on the whole principle of Church Establishments. Its publication was called for,¹ and the sudden and wide acceptance which it met with showed how well the ground had been prepared, and how generally these opinions were held by all classes of Scottish Dissenters.

¹ Ecclesiastical Establishments considered, a Sermon by the Rev. A. Marshall, Glasgow, Lochhead 1829.

But this was only a preliminary step. What really stirred the controversy was the passing of the Reform Bill three years afterwards in 1832. Scotland had just been roused by a political agitation, which at one time came very near to becoming a Revolution. But the Reform Bill became law; the middle classes were enfranchised—among these dissent was powerful; and the political ascendancy identified with Moderatism was overthrown. Old institutions were threatened all round; the advocates of Voluntaryism naturally availed themselves of their opportunity; the Edinburgh Voluntary Association was formed in September 1832, and similar Societies arose all over the country. Five months afterwards—29th January 1833—a great meeting was held in Edinburgh, which I well remember, for I was present, at which elaborate speeches were delivered by leading men belonging to all the Dissenting denominations.

On the side of the Established Church this attack was met by a no less energetic reply, and all Scotland was soon involved in the turmoil of the conflict. But when Dr Chalmers stepped into the arena, the movement at once

assumed more formidable proportions. Ever since his settlement in Glasgow long years before, he had set his heart on reclaiming the neglected masses of our large cities. This was far more to him than any victory in argument on the question of Voluntaryism. At the same time, he felt that the sight of the Church grappling with the lapsed population of poor localities would be the best proof of the value of an Establishment, and the best reply to the attacks of Voluntaryism. With these views, he set about the erection of new churches; an appeal was made to Government for a modest endowment on their behalf, and at one time it seemed as if it were on the eve of success.

Then it was that the controversy rose to its full height. Excited meetings and courses of lectures were everywhere held. The press teemed with pamphlets, speeches, magazine articles innumerable. The Central Board of Scottish Dissenters was formed. Strong representations were addressed to Government, and strong appeals to the country. Deputation after deputation went up to London, and for several years all the machinery of a powerful agitation on both sides was kept actively at

work. It is not for us, however, to trace the course of these discussions, our one object is to show how the question of Spiritual Independence was mixed up with them, and what effect this had in preparing for the events of 1843.

Reverting to Dr Marshall's Synod Sermon in 1829, we find him objecting to Church Establishments on ten different grounds. Of these, he considers the 6th as specially important,¹ namely, that a Religious Establishment has "a tendency to secularise the Church of Christ, to bring it into conformity with the kingdoms of this world, giving it much of the appearance, and what is worse, much of the spirit of a political institution." In another publication issued the following year,² he states "that the office-bearers of such churches in conducting their affairs, even allowing them to be conscientious men, are not at liberty to consult their consciences."

Such was the keynote struck at the outset, but soon it was sounded in yet bolder tones. At one of the earlier meetings of the Edinburgh

¹ Sermon, pp. 30-35.

² Letter to Rev. A. Thomson, D.D., p. 74. Glasgow, M. Lochhead 1830.

Voluntary Association, Andrew Coventry Dick, Esq., Advocate, a leading authority on the Voluntary side, undertook to prove that an ecclesiastical Establishment "must be more or less Erastian; that is, that a Church which is endowed and established must give up a part at least of its native freedom and be subjected to the State."¹

This view was taken up and reiterated from many platforms in all parts of the country, and was often expressed in more unguarded terms. To establish the Church they maintained was to place her in subjection to the State, and subordinate things spiritual to the civil power.

On the other side the defenders of the Establishment at once replied by repudiating the allegation, at the same time admitting that if the objection could be made good it would be fatal; if the Church by becoming established must give up her spiritual independence, it would be an unlawful compact. Never could the Church be warranted in parting with the liberty with which Christ had made her free.

¹ Report of the Annual Meeting of the Voluntary Association 1834, p. 33.

On this point it soon appeared that the leading advocates on both sides were resolved to concentrate their strength. How this was done will be best seen if we take some of the representative men—Dr Inglis and Dr Chalmers, for example—as defenders of the Establishment, and Dr Marshall and Dr Wardlaw, two of their ablest opponents.

First, let us notice how the matter is put by Dr Inglis.¹ He had been the leader of the Moderate party in the Church, but now near the end of his life his views seem to have been greatly modified. He was a man of clear intellect, and his treatise was on all hands admitted to be the ablest vindication of Establishments which appeared during the controversy. Replying to the above objection, his statement is.²

“The Kingdom of Christ is not only spiritual and heavenly but also independent. No earthly Government has a right to overrule or control it. . . . If any civil Government under pretence of providing for the welfare of Christ’s spiritual kingdom shall usurp its

¹ Father of Lord Glencorse, the late Lord Justice General.

² Vindication of Ecclesiastical Establishments, by John Inglis, D.D., 1834. 2nd Edition, p. 90 *seq.*

peculiar and appropriate jurisdiction; if civil Government shall attempt to direct the appropriate concerns of the visible Church of Christ by either superseding or controlling its separate and independent power, that Government is so far an adversary of Christ and of His cause in the world. But if the civil Government shall, on the contrary, abstain from intermeddling about such matters, and shall notwithstanding contribute its outward aid towards the maintenance of religious ordinances in the way which the office-bearers of the Church have themselves approved and appointed; if it shall so provide for the temporal wants of the ministers of Christ as to enable them to devote their whole time and labour to the exercise of their spiritual functions, and shall by the same means extend the benefit of religious ordinances more equally and effectually to all who are under their charge—shall these things be regarded as subversive of the independence of Christ's spiritual kingdom?"

When Dr Inglis's vindication appeared it made a powerful impression; a reply was naturally called for, and there stepped forth the original assailant, Dr Marshall, who, in the words of Dr Cairns, "then stood among the

highest names in the Secession.”¹ His plan was to reply *seriatim* to every section of the book, but his answer to the above is far less elaborate than might have been expected. It consists mainly of a quotation from one of Dr Cook’s speeches giving those views of the Church’s constitution with which the Evangelical party were so familiar in the Assembly debates, and which they so firmly repudiated. Having done this, he dismisses the subject with an intimation that Dr Inglis’s opinion as to spiritual independence was a mere bravado.

He should have remembered how often in the Church’s former history it had been no bravado, but a principle held dearer than life.

As time went on, this topic came more and more distinctly into the foreground, but its full importance is best seen in the London Lectures of Dr Chalmers, and in the reply by Dr Wardlaw.

It was in April 1838 that Dr Chalmers, on the invitation of an influential Society, delivered a short course of Lectures in the Hanover Square Rooms, London. The general

¹ Memoir of John Brown, D.D., p. 171.

question of Church Establishments was fully argued, and specially on the question of Spiritual Independence he put forth all his strength. To a friend he remarked in private at the time : " It is the most important point in the whole discussion ; it is the basis and strength of my whole argument ; without it I could not have opened my mouth on the subject ; and if there be any one of these Lectures on which my mind is clearer and more made up than another, it is on the Lecture I am going to deliver to-day."¹

Proceeding accordingly to show that the Church might be established and yet abide " as spiritual, as holy, as independent as before," he began by referring to a conversation he had had with an American clergyman, who said to him, " If all you mean by an Establishment is an organised provision for the clergy, we should rejoice in it. The thing we deprecate is the authority of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. Now this," Dr C—— went on, " this organised provision is truly all that we contend for . . . an arrangement which might truly be gone into, and which actually is gone

¹ Memoirs of Dr Chalmers, by Dr Hanna, vol. iv. p. 44.

into without the slightest infringement on the spiritual prerogatives of the Church, or the ecclesiastical independence of her clergymen. . . . We know of nothing more perfect in this respect than the constitution of the Church of Scotland. There is to each of its members an independent voice from within, and from without there is no power or authority whatever in matters ecclesiastical. . . . We have no other connection with the State than that of being maintained by it, after which we are left to regulate the proceedings of our great Home Mission [the Church] with all the purity and the piety and the independence of any Missionary Board. We are exposed to nothing from without which can violate the sanctity of the apostolical character if we ourselves do not violate it. And neither are we exposed to aught which can trench on the authority of the apostolical office if we ourselves make no surrender of it. In things ecclesiastical we decide all."

It was on this footing, and on this alone, he stood forth to advocate the union of Church and State, and he goes on to expend his great powers of eloquent argument and striking illustration in making good his position.

The impression which these Lectures made on the public mind was great—so much so that the London Nonconformists invited Dr Wardlaw to deliver a similar course in reply. Accordingly, in the same month of April of the following year 1839, he appeared in London and lectured with all his well-known ability, unfolding the argument on the side of Voluntaryism in its utmost strength.

On the question of the Church's spiritual freedom he meets the views of Dr Chalmers at great length.¹ "We charge it," he says, "on Establishments as one of their serious evils that they interfere with the spiritual and divinely chartered independence of the Church." He quotes from Hallam to the effect that the Church has undoubtedly surrendered a part of her independence in return for ample endowments and temporal power. "Such surrender," Dr Wardlaw continues, "we regard as necessarily involved in the constitution of every Established—that is, of every nationally endowed—Church; and while we consider the requisition of the surrender as,

¹ National Establishments examined, a course of Lectures by Ralph Wardlaw, D.D., pp. 346 *seq.* London: Jackson & Walford 1839.

in the principle of it on the part of the State, perfectly fair, we denounce compliance with the requisition on the part of the Church . . . as a shameless dereliction of her primary allegiance—a simoniacal sacrifice of the exclusive authority of her Lord for temporal benefits—a sacrifice unjustifiable even on the ground alleged on its behalf of these temporal benefits being sought for spiritual ends.”

Following up this general announcement of his views, he proceeds to consider the sacrifice of the Church’s independence from three points of view—her creed, the appointment of her ministers, and the power of her Courts. On each of these topics he presents an elaborate argument in which he puts forth all his strength. His own theory of the relation between Church and State is that there ought to be complete separation. “The true and legitimate province of the magistrate,” he says, “in regard to religion is to have no province at all.” He was the advocate thus of Voluntaryism in its extreme form, but his Lectures were received with admiration by the London Nonconformists, who, as they state, anticipated from their publication “a new and decisive victory to truth.”

We do not stay to go further into detail. This is not the place to give our own views as to the value of these arguments and replies. The single point on which we lay stress is that all these writers and speakers on both sides consider the principle of spiritual independence to be vital. It is the Thermopylæ of the debate. And this was the view not only of outstanding men like Dr Inglis and Dr Chalmers on the one side, or of Dr Marshall and Dr Wardlaw on the other, but the same thing meets us all through the controversy. Hardly any pamphlet appeared, hardly any public meeting was held in crowded city or rural district, but the cry on the one side was that the Church if established must even in things spiritual bend its neck under the yoke of State control; and the reply on the other side was that the Established Church must have, and actually had, spiritual independence and freedom in all her ecclesiastical proceedings, owning no Lord or Master but Christ.

The vital and essential importance of this principle indeed is obvious. Spiritual independence means allegiance to Christ. Without that principle in the thick of the conflict it would have been impossible for the defenders of the

Established Church to have stood their ground. If it were really true that in order to become established the Church must sacrifice her independence and her unfettered freedom to follow Christ, then the cause of the Establishment was lost.

✓ It was in this way that the Voluntary controversy prepared men for the Ten Years' Conflict and the Disruption. It brought home to their minds the importance of the great Free Church principle. Not for a moment, however, must it be supposed that the defenders of Establishment were driven by stress of argument to adopt the principle of spiritual independence in order to serve a purpose. That principle was hereditary with them. They had grown up in the belief of it. Many a time the Church had battled for it and upheld it in days gone by. Even in modern times, long before the Voluntary controversy was heard of, as, for example, in 1814 and 1816, we find Chalmers insisting on it in its integrity.¹ But when the battle was at the gate threatening the existence of the Establishment, the conflict sharpened and deepened

¹ Memoirs, vol. i. p. 397. Appendix L, p. 496.

men's sense of its importance. If the Established Church is to be saved, spiritual independence is essential. Give us spiritual independence, and we shall have much to say in support of Establishments. Deprive us of spiritual independence, say that the Church is to be so controlled that she is no longer free to follow the mind of Christ according to her own judgment, let it be found that she must barter her spiritual jurisdiction in return for her emoluments, the very idea of such a surrender would be intolerable. This was the truth which the Voluntary controversy drove home on the minds of men. If the Establishment is to stand, the Church must be unfettered and free to follow Christ. And free she was in the estimation of all those who composed the Evangelical party, the great majority in her ranks. While that controversy was being carried on to the end, not a man of us all had a doubt that the inheritance of spiritual independence for which our forefathers contended was actually in possession of the Church.

The question, however, was soon to be put to the proof. How the trial came about and with what results must now be told as briefly and simply as the case admits of.

In 1834, when the Evangelical party obtained the power, it became their duty to redress the grievances against which they had so long been protesting during the times of Moderate ascendancy. Two of these accordingly received immediate attention.

First they reversed the policy of the Moderate party in regard to the settlement of ministers. The call of the people, which had been all but extinguished, must be revived, and the old law of the Church must be acted on, that "no minister be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people." After much consultation, a rule was adopted—the Veto Law—as being the mildest form in which to give effect to the call; all who did not oppose the presentee were counted as his supporters. Some thought that the abolition of Patronage should have been sought, but that would have required an Act of Parliament, and the prospect of gaining the assent of the House of Lords at that time was hopeless. Here, on the other hand, was a thing which the Church might do, and had legally the power of doing, as the Crown lawyers of the day assured her. At the same time, men were free to advocate the abolition of Patron-

age if they saw fit, but this was a thing which could be done at once.

A second step was that all chapel ministers were to have Kirk Sessions appointed to aid them in their work, and were admitted to a seat in the Courts of the Church, being thus put on the same footing with the rest of their brethren. This Act was carefully guarded—so far as the Church could do it—and confined to the spiritualities of the ministerial office. It seemed to be required in a rightly constituted Presbyterian Church, and it was essential if the Church were to meet the spiritual wants of an increasing population to the best advantage. These two Acts were passed in 1834, and the first led to a series of conflicts which ran on for ten years with ever-increasing severity. The conflict in regard to the second came later, but culminated in still more serious complications at the General Assembly of 1843.

Under the first there arose a case at Auchterarder, where the parishioners were all but unanimous in rejecting the presentee. Considering himself wronged, he applied to the Civil Courts for redress. There was long litigation, but ultimately the decision was to the effect

that the Church was not at liberty to make the resistance of the congregation a ground for refusing to go on with the settlement. The rule of the Established Church must be that the judgment and the feelings of a Christian congregation were of no account.

This decision, viewed by itself, was sufficiently damaging; but taken in connection with the principles of law, laid down at the time by the majority of the Court of Session, and unanimously in the House of Lords, it was fatal to all claim on the part of the Church to any spiritually independent jurisdiction. The crucial point was that according to the principles of law laid down the only authority which the Church had—the only authority, at least, which the Courts could recognise her as having—was that derived from the State. Her only jurisdiction was what the law of the land conferred. The claim to inherent spiritual jurisdiction and independence was utterly crushed. All the freedom she had was that conceded by the State, and the civil judges would tell her in each case how much or how little it was. Let us observe the position.

A question has arisen as to what is required for the ordination of a minister. The Church

decides that the nominee of the patron cannot be ordained against the conscientious opposition of the people. The old law of the Church forbade it, and morally and spiritually she held it would be a grievous wrong inflicted on the parish. The Civil Court, on the other hand, decided that the Church must go forward as if the will of the people had never been expressed. Thus far they claimed authority to control the Church as to what was necessary or not necessary in settling and ordaining men to the office of the ministry.

If there had been any doubt as to what this meant, it was made plain at Marnoch, where the presentee was so obnoxious to the people that the only supporter in the parish who signed his call was the innkeeper. He applied to the Court of Session asking that the Presbytery "should be decerned and ordained," not only to examine him, but "forthwith to admit and receive him as minister of the Church and Parish." The Court granted his application; it was merely a corollary to what they had already done in the Auchterarder case. The Court knew that if he were to be settled, he must be ordained; and the order, therefore, that he should be forthwith

“admitted and received” was in reality an order to ordain. They thus assumed the right to control the Church in the Act of Ordination.¹ Now, if there is one Act more than another which belongs exclusively to the Church, it is ordination to the sacred office of the ministry, and the *conditions on which* ordination should be conferred or refused. The office is spiritual, all its functions are spiritual. The true minister is he who is moved by the Holy Ghost. In the whole proceedings connected with ordination there is a sacredness and solemnity which belongs to no other appointment. The fatal thing, therefore, in those decisions of the Civil Courts was not merely that they overbore the conscientious opposition of the people, but they assumed the right to dictate to the Church as to what was or was not required in order to the solemn Act of Ordination. It was an interference

¹ It is true that the Court was only ordering the Presbytery to do what of their own accord they were willing to do. But they were prohibited by the superior Ecclesiastical Courts to which they owed obedience, and when the Civil Judges decreed and ordained that the Presbytery must go on to “admit and receive,” i.e., to ordain the presentee, they obviously claimed to have authority over the Church in that part of her work—the ordaining of men to the office of the ministry.

by the Civil Courts with the rights and liberties of Christ's spiritual kingdom to which the Church could not submit.

Here, then, was a decision which cut to the quick, wounding the conscientious convictions of those who had championed the cause of the Established Church and upheld her claim to independence.

In the Marnoch case there soon arose still more serious complications. The majority of the Presbytery belonged to the Moderate party. They were willing to intrude. To protect the parish from the intrusion of the presentee, it was found necessary to put on trial seven ministers of the Presbytery who were resisting their ecclesiastical superiors and violating their ordination vows. On their continuing to resist, they were first suspended from all clerical functions, and ultimately they were deposed. On their own application, however, the Civil Court came to their rescue, and professedly annulled the sentence of the Church. The ministers accepted this as valid, and went on with their work as ministers under the authority of the judges. It was as if the Civil Court and these ministers had combined to trample in the dust the Church's spiritual jurisdiction.

There was, however, the second great Act of 1834, which admitted the chapel ministers, and here the results were, if possible, more formidable still. But before speaking of these, it may be well to notice the general principle which guided the Civil Courts in all these proceedings.

There is no need to suppose that the judges had any hostile feelings against the Church. It was their duty in the Civil Court to protect what they believed to be the civil rights of all parties, and to see that justice was done to them.

And it is obvious that if in giving redress for any supposed wrong they had confined themselves to things civil and temporal, they would have been within their rights. The stipend might have been taken away, manse and glebe forfeited, and if that were not enough, other penalties imposed—that would have been competent. The fatal error was, that in order to protect civil interests they considered it necessary that the Church should perform certain ecclesiastical acts, and they held they had a right to control the Church in the discharge of her own sacred functions.

Unfortunately, they introduced a new reading of the old Scottish laws assimilating them to

the Erastianised system of English law.¹ "In England the sovereign is supreme governor of the Church, and his Law Courts have a control over her corresponding to that supremacy. Not the Legislature only in making the law, but the judges in administering it, control the Church in what is undoubtedly her native and proper province."² Following some such model, the Scottish judges assumed similar control over the Scottish Church even in her own proper sphere.

It is well that we clearly understand what this means. The general principle of the law as now established in Scotland is that the Church derives its whole jurisdiction from the State, and holds it as defined by the State. In all ecclesiastical affairs the Courts hold that the State can set limits to the Church, and if ever they are of opinion that she has gone over the limits so set, they will give redress not only by adjusting the civil interests involved, but by controlling the Church in her own proper functions. The Church is thus subordinate,

¹ The formerly received view on this subject was upheld by a powerful minority of the judges, among whom was the oldest and one of the ablest men on the bench, Lord Glenlee, who spoke for the judges of a past generation.

² A. Taylor Innes, Esq., Advocate.

for she is not at liberty to decide for her own guidance in her own work.

This was manifest beyond all question in regard to the Chapel Act. The Church felt it to be her duty to meet the spiritual wants of a growing population. While planting new Churches, she felt it equally to be her duty to give them all the advantages of her Presbyterian constitution, assigning them Kirk Sessions, and making the ministers members of Presbytery. This she held herself bound to do for the cause of Christ and the spiritual good of the people. She did it in virtue of her inherent right as a Christian Church bound to obey Christ her Head. She did her utmost to see that no civil interest was interfered with; they were churches only *quoad sacra*. It was an ecclesiastical arrangement intended solely for the edification of the people.

At first the Act was welcomed, and for five years all went well, but at last the question was raised in the Law Courts, and they decided that the Church had no power to do what she was doing. These chapel ministers must be expelled, their Kirk Sessions and parochial arrangements abolished, and interdicts were issued prohibiting

them from sitting in the Church Courts, and prohibiting the Church Courts from allowing them to sit.

But how could the Church submit to this? If she is a spiritually independent Church, she must have the power to appoint her own office-bearers. Every independent institution has that inherent right. But there is something still more important. In carrying on the affairs of Christ's House, and in providing for the edification of the people, the Church is bound to listen to no voice but the voice of Christ. Freedom to fulfil the obligations laid on her by her Divine Master is essential. To be hampered and arrested in such work by the coercion of civil judges was a yoke which the Church could not consent to bear.

But that was not all. When the interdicts began, the whole constitution of Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies was affected, and in cases of Discipline especially the results were disastrous.

There was a minister, for example, charged with several acts of fraud. The trial had gone on, the charges were found proved, *he had confessed, and sentence had been passed.* After all, he took

refuge in the Court of Session, pleading that the chapel ministers had taken part in the proceedings. After what they had done already, the Court could not logically refuse. They issued a decree of suspension and interdict, and shielded the accused from his sentence. Unfortunately, this was no solitary instance. Two other ministers were before the Church Courts—one accused of theft, and the other of drunkenness—and in both cases the Civil Court could not help coming to their aid. But what position was this for a Church to occupy? Was she so under control that she was not free to say who were to be members of her Courts in things spiritual, not free to protect her own purity? Had the Civil Court a right to interfere and control the Church in such matters? Then, surely, it was futile to speak any longer of the Church's spiritual independence. So far as the Establishment was concerned, the Civil Courts had made an end of it.

One thing had all along been clear—the Church could submit on no terms to hold such a position. But the question remained, Did the State really mean it? As yet these were merely the decisions of the Civil Courts. Did

the State actually intend to impose such conditions? It only remained to ascertain this by making a formal appeal to Parliament and to the Queen.

This was done in two forms. First, there was the Claim of Right, in which the Church, addressing the Throne, set forth the grievances under which she suffered and craved redress. Next, a Convocation of Ministers met in November 1842 and forwarded a second appeal in similar terms, along with formal resolutions to the effect that if redress were refused they must abandon the Establishment. Then, finally, in March 1843 the Commission of Assembly brought the whole subject by petition before the House of Commons.

Everything that man could do was done to avert the crisis. But the crisis came. First, there was a reply from the Government, and next a vote by the House of Commons, and the result in both cases was decisive—every form of redress was directly refused, and in such terms as to preclude all hope for the future. It should be noted that if the question in the House of Commons had depended on the votes of the Scottish members of Parliament, the decision

would have gone the other way. They were overborne by English influence.

Here, then, we stand at an important crisis in the history of the Church of Scotland. It was the close of a long struggle which had gone on for nearly three hundred years. The Church ever since the days of Knox had claimed her spiritual independence and freedom to serve Christ, according to her own views of duty. She had fought for it against Mary and Lethington, against Morton with his Tulchan Bishops, against James and Charles with their kingcraft and violence. She had stood the storm of persecution through the blood-stained reign of the second Charles; she had contended with King William; and even through the long dead time of Moderatism a faithful band of noble witnesses had stood by her Constitution, overborne as it was in the interests of Patronage. It had been a gallant struggle all along for the liberty with which Christ had made His Church free. But now at last it was over and done with. The Judges in our Civil Courts, the Government of Sir Robert Peel and the English House of Commons, did what no statecraft and no arbitrary violence of former generations had

ever been able permanently to do. The Constitution was broken down. The spiritual independence of the Church was overthrown.

Would this, then, be submitted to? Would the Church which had stood out in former days give way now? The reply came on the 18th of May 1843 in the view of all the world. The true old Church of Scotland, adhering to her principles, had once more, as in 1662, to renounce her connection with the State, and leaving all emoluments behind her, go forth not only the Free Church of Scotland, but **THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND FREE.**

The circumstances in which this was done, and the trials which it involved, I have been called on to narrate elsewhere, and need not here describe.

But now what immediately concerns us is the question as to our present position. In this connection it should be carefully observed that the law of Church and State which was settled in 1843 remains the law still. Patronage has indeed been abolished. Unable as the Free Church was with all her efforts ever to wring one concession for herself from the State, her influence in the country has compelled Parliament at the instance of the Established Church

herself to wipe out the law of Patronage from the Statute Book. But in regard to the question of spiritual jurisdiction and independence the Church stands where it stood before. The law this day knows of no independent spiritual jurisdiction as held by the Church from Christ her Head. Her authority is from Cæsar, and she must be content with what Cæsar allows.¹

It is not for us to say how it would fare with the present Established Church on the field of argument if the old Voluntary controversy were one day to break forth in its former keenness. On the general question of the union between Church and State, I hold the view which has been so generally held in the Free Church, that national religion in the form of an Establishment

¹ It is sometimes alleged that the Free Church, after resigning her position, is still as much as ever under the control of the Civil Courts. This is unquestionably true in regard to the money and property of the Church, as well as the liberty and the lives of the members. These, "the Church has always maintained, are and ought to be under the control of the Courts of Law. But the ecclesiastical functions of the Church are under no such control." If the attempt were made to encroach on these functions, it would be an act of manifest injustice. We knew well enough before the Disruption that we could have no security against such encroachments outside the Establishment (*Annals of the Disruption*, pp. 5, 6) any more than inside. Attempts might be made to deprive us of freedom of conscience, or subject us to per-

in certain circumstances is right and expedient, but all experience has shown how little likelihood there is of such circumstances arising in the present state of the country.

In the meantime, one thing is clear, that Dr Chalmers and those who fought by his side in former days would have flatly refused the defence of Establishments on the present footing. It was spiritual independence, he says, which was "the basis and strength" of his whole argument. "Without it I could not have opened my mouth on the subject." If the taint of Erastianism is to cleave to the Church, and if Voluntary assailants demand its Disestablishment, there is and there can be no defence.

secution, which the Christian Church has often had to endure. In our case it would be specially unjust, for "no branch of the Christian Church has ever made spiritual independence and freedom from all such encroachments so fundamental an article of its constitution as the Free Church has." The entire Church property, and the whole position of every member in the Church, is held explicitly on that condition. But, after all, whatever encroachments might be attempted, the freedom of the Church is safe so long as she refuses her consent to such encroachments, and is prepared to take all the consequences of her refusal. This was what she did in 1843; she refused her consent to the Erastian conditions of the Establishment. If the Free Church is only true to herself and her principles and her history—if she is only true to the Lord Jesus Christ, her Spiritual Independence is safe.

Enough, I trust, has been said in these Lectures to show the importance of studying closely the history of our Scottish Presbyterian Church. No one can understand our present position without knowing how far it has its roots in the past. The place which we hold to-day is the result of forces which have been acting through former generations. The influence of one of these forces—the spiritual independence of the Church—I have endeavoured to trace and to show, so far as our limits would allow, what it has done to make our people and our Free Church what they now are.

It would be a shallow way of looking at the Disruption to regard it merely as an isolated fact. We must take along with it those causes of which it is the result. The place which the Free Church holds to-day is, under God, the outcome of forces which have been at work ever since Scotland, in the days of Knox, awoke into national life. Of that great Reformation movement, our whole country has ever since felt the benefit, and of that benefit our Free Church has had her full share.

I remarked at the outset that the principle of spiritual independence which has done so

much in the past may still have important work to do in the future. Of the problems now before us in Scotland, one of the most pressing is the question as to how our divided Presbyterianism is to be united. It can hardly be that the present state of things can go on long as it is. Three large Presbyterian denominations with so much in common can hardly continue to oppose each other as they do all over the land. The cause of religion in our country and over the world seems to demand that ere long there shall be among us a reconstructed and truly national Presbyterian Church. No one can be blind to the fact that there are forces in the midst of us silently and surely working towards that end.

In these circumstances it may be asked, What is the duty of the Free Church? What are we naturally called on to do? The practical question is not one on which I have here a right to speak. But in connection with the subject of these Lectures, this much may be safely said, that whatever shape the movement for Union may take, the principle of spiritual independence—come what may—will not be allowed to be put into the background. We know how

completely our brethren of the United Presbyterian Church hold this principle in common with the Free Church. The difficulty will lie with our brethren of the Established Church. In 1843 they submitted to the conditions which the State imposed. The Veto Law which the Church had solemnly enacted, they held, did not even need to be annulled, because the Civil Court had disallowed it. Ministers whom the Church had solemnly deposed did not need to be reponed, for the secular judges had annulled their deposition. In regard to the *quoad sacra* ministers, the Church owned herself powerless to give them Kirk-Sessions and a place in her Church Courts, and she owns herself powerless to-day, unless she gets permission from the civil judges.

Thus it stood in 1843, the Church submitted to the Civil Courts, and the precedents then laid down are in force to this day. The law as to the union between Church and State is now defined and settled. Surely it is not for the Free Church to take such a position. Spiritual independence is a principle which rises far above all questions of Endowment or State connection. These are subordinate arrangements, incidents which may come or go, but the Church's undivided loyalty to her

Divine Head must stand fast as a sacred duty for ever.

Still the Union of the Presbyterianism of Scotland into one great national faithful Church is an object for which every lover of our country and of the cause of Christ in the world is bound to strive and pray. If it shall be found that the great obstacle is the position which the Established Church now occupies, the question must arise,—shall that be allowed to continue as a dividing cause, keeping the Churches asunder? The point may well be seriously considered by the Established Church herself. It is a question for the future, and possibly for the not distant future.

In the course of these Lectures I have from time to time referred to the lessons which this History teaches. For nearly three hundred years our godly forefathers contended for the Headship of Christ and the spiritual independence of His Church. In days of trial they thought it was not too high a price to pay when for these principles they laid down their lives. In all their contendings the leading motive was the deep feeling which they had of loyalty

to Christ as their personal Saviour. It was this endeared to their hearts the cause for which they suffered, and made them in so many cases the faithful, humble, fearless men they were. May God grant to the Church of these latter days something of the same spirit of devotedness to the Master whom she serves! Only thus will she be enabled to fulfil her high commission, walking in the footsteps of the saints and martyrs who have gone before us, and, above all, in the footsteps of Him who is the Church's only King and Head. In the days that are to come the success of the Free Church must depend on the steadfastness with which she bears faithful testimony for God's truth in the world, and the zeal of her self-denying efforts in His service. Looking back on the past, we have good reason thankfully to say, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us;" and looking to the future, we may well go forward trusting in the promise of our Divine Master, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

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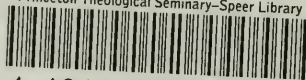
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